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Today is the beginning of the 53rd legislature, first regular session. To mark the start of the new session, Governor Ducey delivered his third State of the State speech to a gathering of legislators, Supreme Court justices, state leaders, and high-profile business and education representatives.

The speech covered [a wide range of priorities and proposals](#), many of which will be debated as the session unfolds.

- Education

Governor Ducey acknowledged the need for steps beyond Proposition 123, which designated resources for education priorities across the state. He laid out [a series of actions](#) he believed should occur, including additional funding each year for public schools, teacher pay, loan forgiveness, full-day kindergarten, and broadband resources in rural schools. He called for state universities and community colleges to cooperatively create a [teacher's academy](#) that would train teachers at reduced costs, and urged the state to repeal teacher certification requirements and allow schools to set their own teacher standards. He encouraged ongoing focus on the efforts of continuing career and technical education and AchieveAZ60, a program that has brought together business and education leaders to enhance educational attainment in the state.

- Health and Welfare

The Governor called for the legislature to “act with urgency” to expand newborn screenings to include a test for Severe Combined Immuno Deficiency (SCID). He urged the legislature to restore the benefits it has reduced for Taxpayer Assistance for Needy Families, adding another 12 months for those looking for work and helping raise their children. (The legislature [previously reduced](#) the TANF lifetime benefit to 12 months – the most limited benefit in the country.) And he requested legislation that would provide Good Samaritan immunity for anyone who saved the life of a child or pet.

The Governor also directed Arizona medical oversight entities to require every doctor in Arizona to receive one hour of continuing education about addiction, to enhance the medical community's ability to fight drug addiction in the state.

- Criminal Justice and Recidivism

Governor Ducey continued his focus on testing of rape kits, and pledged to eliminate the backlog of kits to be tested this year. He committed to ongoing focus on test kits in order to pursue justice for rape victims.

To reduce the rate of recidivism amongst inmates across the state, the Governor called for enhanced partnerships with faith and non-profit organizations to create a network of support for those leaving prison, and for enhanced employment centers inside prisons to train and prepare for the workforce outside prison walls. In addition, the Governor signed [an executive order](#) that will provide Vivitrol – an addiction-blocking drug – to prisoners as they leave incarceration.

- Family

The Governor called for financial assistance to extended family members who take in a foster child, and pledged to extend a “babies at work” program that has allowed state employees in two agencies to bring their newborns to work with them for six months. The Governor labeled it “a win-win-win” for the state, the employee, and the child.

- Cybersecurity

Governor Ducey declared it is the government’s responsibility to protect the personal information of its citizens, and pledged additional investments in improved cybersecurity.

- Regulations

The Governor continued his longstanding opposition to regulations, reasserting his belief that freedom from fees and government standards will draw investments and individuals from other states. He announced that 500 government regulations will be repealed this year if they do not protect consumers, public health, or public safety. He directed Arizonans to [a website](#) where they can suggest changes to government oversight.

In addition, the Governor renewed his call for Arizona to be removed from the jurisdiction of the 9th circuit court of appeals. He pledged support for law enforcement and the Border Safety Task Force, and announced [free access](#) to state parks over Martin Luther King, Jr Day weekend as a celebration of the State Parks system’s 60th anniversary.

The Governor pledged that he would not call for any tax increase, but did not yet provide details on how he believed his priorities should be funded. Additional details will be available when he releases his budget proposal on Friday.