Senate Committee Chairs:

Senate President-elect Bob Burns has reduced the number of Senate committees and has announced chairmanships for Arizona's 49th Legislature.

The new Legislature will have 12 committees instead of 13, and some have been reorganized and renamed. Conspicuously absent was the Transportation Committee. Meanwhile, the K-12 and Higher Education committees have been combined.

Burns also gave Sen. Thayer Verschoor the post of president pro tempore. Verschoor was a contender for the position of Senate president, but he decided not to challenge Burns during the caucus' organizational meeting.

Burns will serve simultaneously as chairman of the Rules Committee. He is the fourth Senate president since the 1975-76 session to act concurrently as chairman of Rules. Pete Rios was the most recent in 1991.

Republicans Steve Pierce and Al Melvin, both newcomers to the Senate, and Sen. Sylvia Allen, who replaced the late Sen. Jake Flake in June, were not named as committee chairs.

Here are Senate committee assignments:

Appropriations - Sen.-elect Russell Pearce, Mesa

Commerce & Economic Development - Sen. Barbara Leff, Paradise Valley

Education Accountability & Reform - Sen. John Huppenthal, Chandler

Finance - Sen. Jim Waring, Phoenix

Government Institutions - Sen. Jay Tibshraeny, Chandler

Healthcare and Medical Liability Reform - Sen. Carolyn Allen, Scottsdale

Natural Resources, Infrastructure and Public Debt - Sen.-elect John Nelson, Glendale

Judiciary - Sen.-elect Jonathan Paton, Tucson

Veterans and Military Affairs - Sen. Jack Harper, Surprise

Retirement and Rural Development - Sen. Ron Gould, Lake Havasu City

Public Safety and Human Services - Sen. Linda Gray, Glendale

Rules- Sen. Bob Burns, Peoria