

### **Nobody likes to cede power**

An attempt to create a governing board to oversee the Arizona State Hospital may have died due to opposition from the Ninth Floor. The House passed S1710 (state hospital; governing board; governance) today after Montenegro amended the bill yesterday to remove language that would have created a new five-member board made of individuals with behavioral health expertise to oversee the hospital instead of ADHS. The Montenegro amendment also allowed petitions for court-ordered treatment in small counties to include affidavits from a physician's assistant with relevant experience or a mental health nurse, not just a doctor. Will Humble, executive director of the Arizona Public Health Assn, supported the original bill, arguing the hospital shouldn't be regulated by the same body that operates it.

He speculated that Hobbs' opposition to the bill could have led to the amendment to remove the governing board proposal, citing an email in which the Ninth Floor expressed "serious civil rights concerns." He said the amendment "felt like a deal to get something" instead of risking that Hobbs would veto the bill. That seems to have been the case. Gowan said the original bill – which passed the Senate on a 27-2 vote – may have had bipartisan support in the House "but I don't think I get a signature."

A Hobbs spokesman didn't respond to a request to comment on the governor's position, though Arizona Dept of Health Services signed in against the bill earlier this year. The dept changed its position to neutral yesterday, the same day the House adopted the Montenegro amendment. Gowan, who said he considered making the amendment in the Senate, indicated he didn't want to sacrifice the part of the bill to allow petitions for court-ordered treatment in rural counties to include affidavits from nurse practitioners or physician assistants. "The whole situation was I don't believe I can get the ASH piece passed," he said.