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Governor faces tough session

Hull's agenda in trouble as lawmakers balk

By Rhonda Bodfield Sander

PHOENIX — Gov. Jane Hull was known as 'The Iron Lady' when she ran the Arizona House, but now there's a hint that she can even push her limited agenda through the Legislature.

Some of the conservatives in her own Republican Party grouse that she's too moderate, while the moderates say she isn't talking to them either.

'She's managed to pass off everybody,' summed up Rep. Sue Gerard, a moderate Phoenix Republican who served with her

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when Hull was speaker of the House in the early 1990s.

The legislative session that opened yesterday could be particularly rough going for Hull.

For one thing, lawmakers don't have to pass a budget this year. They want to get out within 75 days, about 25 days faster than in previous years.

One-third of the lawmakers face term limits at the end of this session, meaning they'll be headed for other offices or calling it quits in politics. Either way they may be more independent, less concerned about what party leaders want them to accomplish.

And even some leaders of the Legislature's Republican majority openly balk at certain Hull plans. She wants to rely on bonds to pay for new school buildings to free up more money for other priorities. Conservative lawmakers, who want to pay-as-you-go to avoid interest payments, shot down that plan last year.

The governor isn't afforded great powers. She can veto bills and call lawmakers into session. Other than that, it boils down to her ability to work the bully pulpit, galvanize public opinion and finesse legislative leaders.

Hull is revealing when out-of-the-loop Democrats sound happier than the other side to hear a Republican governor talking.

Short honeymoon

'The leaders of the House and Senate hail from a much more conservative piece of the political spectrum and faster to the day when the discussion was on tax cuts and limited government,' said Senate Republican Minority Leader Chris Cummings of Phoenix. 'Now she's talking about mainstream issues like investing in children, and that doesn't go as well.'

Hull faced some setbacks as early as last year. The first came when she vetoed a record 21 bills. When he was governor, Democrat Bruce Hobbitt vetoed 20 bills passed by the Republican-controlled houses in 1979. Former Gov. Fife Symington, a Republican, didn't come close to that number, even when Democrats controlled the Senate.

'Some members feel some of those (Hull) vetoes were directed personally and had little policy reasons behind them, and (they) struck some as punitive and retaliatory.'

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Gov. Jane Hull applauds legislators honored for their achievements in 1999

Hull's honeymoon with Republican legislative leaders seemed to be a short one. In 1998, facing re-election, lawmakers rallied behind her plans to end gridlock and find money to build and repair schools. They backed her program to expand health care for children, supported her agenda on urban growth controls and passed a tax cut.

'Since then, 95 percent of the people up here say she's turned out (facing term limits herself after 2003), so legislative leadership has cast her overboard,' Cummings said.

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funks into her budget for either program. Hull said there are more pressing priorities that will eat up all the available cash — and then some.

In fact, Hull said the lawmakers must approve her plan to borrow \$125 million for renovation and repair of old schools just to balance the budget.

The governor's stance disappointed state Schools Superintendent Lisa Graham Keegan. She said the funds are critically needed, particularly since high

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AOL + Time: Giant steps in home media

Wire reports

Yesterday's announced merger between Time Warner and America Online is about a not-too-distant day when your television and your computer are one and the same, and when the lines are increasingly blurred between information, entertainment and commerce.

It's a day that Time Warner and AOL, the son of the Old Media and the precocious New Media upstart, together plan to dominate.

Most of all, it's about who can get content into people's homes first and fastest. It's about both companies being on the front end of the convergence wave, and making a lot of money being there, said Keith Woods, a faculty member at the Poynter Institute, a media think tank in St. Petersburg, Fla.

America Online is buying Time Warner, the largest media and entertainment conglomerate in the world, for \$162 billion.

America Online shareholders will own 55 percent of the company, and Time Warner shareholders the rest. The deal values Time Warner at about \$108 a share, a rich premium over its price of \$64.75 a share before yesterday.

Time Warner shares soared 39 percent on news of the deal, climbing \$25.31 to \$90.06 a share on the New York Stock Exchange. AOL shares fell \$1.73 to \$72.

The deal would be the biggest

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Turner stake in Time Warner leaps \$2.4B

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Ted Turner, the cable television pioneer who is vice chairman of Time Warner, has more to gain than anybody from a sale of the company to America Online. He is the biggest individual shareholder of Time Warner, owning about 97 million shares.

When the stock jumped more than \$25 a share yesterday after the proposed deal was announced, the value of Turner's stake rose by \$2.43 billion, to \$8.73 billion.

Three months ago, Forbes magazine estimated Turner's net worth at \$6.9 billion. After yesterday's gain, that number should be pushing \$9.5 billion, making him one of the 20 richest people in America.

No wonder that Turner, 61, said he voted to accept America Online's offer "with as much or more excitement and enthusiasm as I did on that night when I first made love some 42 years ago."

His wife, Jane Fonda, from whom Turner said last week he was separating, probably got a thrill as well. According to Time Warner's last proxy statement, she owned 770,000 shares of Time Warner stock. If she still owned them yesterday, their value increased by \$19.5 million, to \$89.3 million.

Creating a media giant

Uniting the biggest names in new and traditional media. Internet provider America Online will buy Time Warner for about \$190 billion in stock.

Table comparing MERGER and TIME WARNER. Includes columns for Headquarters, Chairman/CEO, Employees, Major properties, Sales, and Web site.

Rich and poor share pain of caring for impaired child

By Julie Deardoff

NEW YORK — Tanika Walker was 2 when she was paralyzed from the neck down in a car accident. She never knew her father. She cannot remember the last time she saw her mother.

For the past 24 years, her home has been a New York hospital bed where she has been turned around the clock. Sometimes she writes about her loneliness and feelings of abandonment by tapping on a computer keyboard with a stick in her mouth.

'I am so angry because my mother made a promise to me and my grandmother that she would come visit me every weekend,' Walker, 26, wrote in an essay. 'She never kept her promise.'

Sometimes Walker thinks she was abandoned by a mother who gave custody to Walker's grandparents because she was too

much trouble. Other times, her writing shows, she feels she must have done something wrong.

What generally happens to parents of severely disabled children, experts say, is that they are emotionally and physically pushed to their limits and burdened by the terrible truth that their child is not going to get better.

Money, education and even tireless devotion do not protect against the overwhelming strains of caring for chronically ill or disabled children, as illustrated by a Pennsylvania couple charged with abandoning their only child the day after Christmas.

In what was either a desperate cry for help or shocking negligence, Richard and Dawn Kobos of Exton, Pa., left the 10-year-old boy at a Delaware hospital with his toys, medical supplies and a note saying they could no

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At least there's snow somewhere

Ah, for those chilly, biting wild rides of winter. Daley Jensen of Pueblo, Colo., went for a tumble while tubing down the slopes near Rye, Colo., was unhurt and went back for more.

The Associated Press

