

Time to Keep the Momentum

THANK YOU to everyone who called, emailed, RTS'd, and showed up to oppose ESA voucher bills SB1320 and SB1395. While the bills passed the Senate Finance Committee (as expected), your presence was impossible to ignore and sent a powerful message. This week, [please contact your own senator](#) asking for their opposition; politely explain these bills are an unnecessary violation of voter will and are counterproductive to the real accountability efforts already underway. In addition, [sign our Letter to Lawmakers](#) to let them know we will not stand for these bills.

Looking ahead, this is the **last week** for bills to be heard in committees in their chamber of origin. Agendas this week are packed: the House Education Committee is meeting even though it's Presidents' Day, and the Senate Education Committee has added an additional meeting on Thursday.

This week, the Senate and House Education Committees are hearing details on two education funding packages, each made up of two separate bills (HCR2024, HB2563, SCR1011, SB1080). One of the packages is being presented "for discussion only" and no vote will be taken. Both packages would add a voter-protected 0.4 cent to the existing Proposition 301 sales tax and update the way funding is allocated to public schools. We are expecting some amendments. SOSAZ is neutral on these bills as written and is monitoring them for improvements.

Calls to Action!

RTS Checklist

-  Support HB2304
-  Support SB1270
-  Oppose SB1438
-  Oppose SB1451
-  Oppose SB1457
-  Email and call YOUR senator about opposing SB1320 and SB1395

Oppose SB1395



- Hands tax dollars to a third-party for-profit vendor promoted by national special interests to privatize and profit from education funding
- Eliminates what few standards are currently in place: re-evaluation of recipients, allowable goods and services, and more, opening the floodgates for even more fraud and abuse!
- Proposes "fixes" that are already in place meaning no actual improvements, just political games
- Expands vouchers to even more people who aren't already eligible via the existing 6 categories. For the cheap seats: AZ voted **NO NEW VOUCHERS!**

Oppose SB1320



- Voters just rejected this exact same proposal via Prop 305 - respect the voters!
- It is irresponsible and harmful to take a complex education program out of the hands of educators and expect accountants to work with families on curriculum, therapies and more
- Lawmakers want to champion ESA accountability? Then have the Legislature release the \$6 million earmarked for ESA oversight that's been withheld from ADE for years

If you haven't already, **JOIN US at a Committee Hearing**. These usually run long, so head down when you can. Wear SOSAZ Red and show them we're watching!

Tuesday

Senate Education Committee Hearing



Thursday

Senate Education Committee Hearing



Click the boxes for details! 

SB 1451



Oppose

Direct Attack on SOS Arizona and Grassroots Political Efforts

Statewide Ballot Measures; Circulators; Procedures Adds Burdens to Ballot Measures
Sen. Vince Leach

This bill would require petitions for statewide initiatives and referenda to be organized and grouped by circulator, and require registration of out-of-state

signature collectors. This is an extra burden on campaigns - especially grassroots campaigns.

It also makes it easier for opponents to disqualify entire signature sheets. This would mean campaigns need even more signatures as a cushion, further raising the already high cost of putting measures on the ballot. This is a direct attack on citizen efforts like our No on Prop. 305!

Scheduled for Senate Rules, Monday.

HB 2304



Support

School Districts; Overrides; Ballot Question Changes "Budget Overrides" to "Local Support" on Ballots
Rep. Michelle Udall

Would change the ballot language for school overrides from asking voters for a "budget override" to asking for "local support."

The phrasing "budget override" is politically loaded and implies a school district cannot live within its means,

whereas "local support" makes the true issue clear — that the community is interested in providing the school district with extra resources. This is a simple rephrasing that can make a tough task for public schools a tiny bit easier.

Scheduled for House Education, Monday.

RTS

CLICK HERE

to have your voice heard through the Arizona Legislature's Request to Speak system.

SB 1270



Support

Office of Indian Education; Assistance

Directs \$1 Million from Lottery to Office of Indian Education

Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai

Would dedicate \$1 million from the state lottery to fund the Office of Indian Education and hire at least 5 full-time employees.

That office is tasked with meeting the educational and cultural needs of Native American students in Arizona yet has no state funding. Because of that, it has just one staff member supporting 22 tribes and 55,572 students. Arizona's reservation schools are desperately under-resourced, with Native American students **falling far behind** the rest of the country in test scores, graduation rates and basic resources.

Teen suicide on the Navajo reservation is 4 times higher than the **already high rate** in Arizona overall.

Scheduled for Senate Education, Thursday.

schools in the same building. This can lead to **siphoning off resources** from the district to the charter school, making under-funding even more punitive for public schools.

Another problem is that "unused space" could target science labs, art and music rooms, special education therapy rooms, and computer labs. Co-location is the new push for privatizers around the country.

Scheduled for Senate Education, Tuesday.

SB 1457



Oppose

Schools; Improvements; Turnaround Plans

Places D or F Rated Schools Under Control of an Administrator

Sen. Sylvia Allen

Would allow the state Board of Education to implement "turnaround plans" to take control from districts where any schools have been assigned a grade of D or F.

An "external manager" would be contracted to hire and fire teachers and superintendents, cancel contracts, even convert schools to charter schools. Letter grades for schools are widely maligned as **measuring socioeconomic status** of pupils rather than academic success.

Roughly half of "D" and "F" grades go to schools where 85% or more of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, while only 3% of schools with that level of poverty get "A" grades. Low-graded schools can be **penalized** by losing state funding, making the real problem of under-funding even worse.

Instead of punishing public schools in low-income communities, increased funding would address the core problem by paying for tutoring, counselors and more academic supports.

Scheduled for Senate Education, Thursday.

SB 1438



Oppose

School Facilities; Revisions Requires Schools to Accept Bids for Utilization of Vacant Space

Sen. Vince Leach

Would require the School Facilities Board to publish a list of vacant or partially used school spaces every year, and would require school districts to accept bids from charter schools for that space if the charter school was the lowest bidder.

The bill is being pushed by the Chamber of Commerce and the Goldwater Institute, with the goal of opening district and charter

HB 2563



Education Funding; Use Tax; TPT Referendum Increasing Prop. 301 to 1¢, Changes Allocation

Rep. Michelle Udall

Would make changes to the way Prop. 301 funds are allocated. It would go into effect only if a companion ballot measure, [HCR2024](#), is passed by the Legislature and approved by voters on the November 2020 General Election ballot.

Arizona for Charter School Accountability is opposed to the bill as written, saying the lack of earmarked funds “would allow charter schools to pocket all Classroom Site Funds earmarked for teacher salaries.”

SOSAZ is neutral on this bill as currently written. House Education Committee chair Rep. Udall says both bills will receive amendments and that she, Sen. Allen and Sen. Brophy McGee are working together to streamline the bills.

SB 1080



TPT; Use Tax; Education Referendum Increasing Prop. 301 to 1¢, Changes Allocation

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would make changes to the way Prop. 301 funds are allocated. It would go into effect only if a companion ballot measure, [SCR1011](#), is passed by the Legislature and approved by the voters on the November 2020 General Election ballot.

SOSAZ is neutral on this bill as currently written.

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HCR 2024



TPT and Use Tax; Education Referendum Increasing Prop. 301 to 1¢, Changes Allocation

Rep. Michelle Udall

This bill is a voter referendum to increase Prop. 301, Arizona’s sales tax for education, by 0.4 cent to a full penny. If passed, it would allocate 75% of the money to K-12 education, 20% to universities, and 5% to community colleges and Native American tribes for workforce development.

SOSAZ is neutral on this bill as currently written.

House Education Committee chair Rep. Udall says both bills will receive amendments and that she, Sen. Allen and Sen. Brophy McGee are working together to streamline the bills.

SCR 1011



TPT and Use Tax; Education Referendum Increasing Prop. 301 to 1¢, Changes Allocation

Sen. Kate Brophy McGee

Asks voters to increase TPT to a full penny, divides it 70% for “primary and secondary classroom education purposes”, 20% for in-state tuition and technology/research initiatives; 5% for community college trade and workforce development programs; 5% for oversight and accountability.

SOSAZ is neutral on this bill as currently written.

House Education Committee chair Rep. Udall says both bills will receive amendments and that she, Sen. Allen and Sen. Brophy McGee are working together to streamline the bills.

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