

10 Weeks In: Here's What to Know

Once again, your involvement is making a difference! Ten weeks into this session, we've successfully influenced the process. Here's what's important now:

Most of this week's excitement will be behind the scenes: budget talks between legislators and the governor's office are under way. Arizona has a projected surplus this year, and everyone has ideas on how to spend it. NOW IS THE TIME to contact your representatives, senator, and the governor and ask them to prioritize significant new funding for public education, because strong public schools make a strong state!

Stay tuned for last-minute updates. With all the behind-the-scenes negotiations, things can happen fast and we need to be poised to respond. So far, our active engagement has kept bad bills stalled and a few good ones moving — let's keep it that way!

Finally, National Public Schools Week is March 25-29! Be on the lookout for official SOSAZ actions and celebrations you can do in person or online to show your love of public education. We'll also be unveiling a new partnership that we're really excited about — stay tuned!

Calls to Action!



Oppose SB1395

Continue to email and call YOUR senator to oppose SB1395.

- Voters oppose all ESA voucher expansions
- Allow the bipartisan ESA Task Force to do its job
- Taxpayers expect more oversight and accountability, not less



Support HB2187

Call and email Appropriations Chairman Sen. Gowan at dgowan@azleg.gov and (602) 926-5154 to hear HB2187.

- Voters want to invest in public education
- Arizona owes a debt to our public schools - literally



Support SB1485

Contact Speaker Bowers at rbowers@azleg.gov and (602) 926-3128 to assign SB1485 to House Education.

- This bill offers a more responsible use of tax dollars
- By keeping these funds in the budget, the state can better support public education



Oppose SCR1023

Call and email YOUR senator to oppose SCR1023.

- Respect Arizona voters' Constitutional rights
- Lawmakers should not play favorites with our democratic rights

Help Support Our Work:

Donate to Save Our Schools Arizona



SAVE OUR SCHOOLS
Strong Schools, Strong State

BILL WATCH LIST + STATUS as of 3/11

- SB1080** (*TPT; use tax; education*) Ready for Senate 3rd read
- SB1395** (*empowerment scholarship accounts; program revisions*) Waiting for Senate COW, stalled
- SB1451** (*statewide ballot measures; circulators; procedures*) Waiting for House 1st read/assign
- SB1460** (*TPT; digital goods and services*) Waiting for Senate caucus, stalled
- SB1485** (*school tuition organization; inflator*) Waiting for House 1st read/assign
- SCR1011** (*TPT; use tax; education*) Ready for Senate 3rd read
- SCR1023** (*initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts*) Waiting for Senate COW, stalled
- HB2187** (*appropriation; K-12 rollover*) Assigned to Senate Appropriations, not yet on an agenda
- HB2563** (*education funding; use tax; TPT*) Waiting for House caucus, stalled
- HCR2005** (*initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts*) Waiting for House caucus, stalled
- HCR2024** (*TPT and use tax; education*) Waiting for House Rules

HB 2187



Support

Appropriation; K-12 Rollover Pays Off Debt Owed to Schools Rep. Michelle Udall

Would pay off the [nearly \\$1 billion “rollover” debt](#) the state owes to schools over a 3-year period. For a decade the state has rolled over its final K-12 education payment to the next fiscal year, an accounting gimmick that delays an expense on paper so it doesn't count toward the current year's budget.

The treasurer's office says Arizona must pay off the rollover before a recession, or

[daily operations of all state government will be at risk](#). Paying this debt won't increase what schools can spend, but it will make their cash management easier.

This proposal may be included in budget negotiations.

SB 1451



Oppose

Statewide Ballot Measures; Circulators; Procedures Creates Higher Hurdles for Statewide Ballot Measures Sen. Vince Leach

Would require all petitions for statewide initiatives and referenda to be organized and grouped by circulator. 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!

SB 1460



Oppose

TPT; Digital Goods and Services Excludes Digital Products from Taxes at Expense to the State Sen. Michelle Ugenti-Rita

Would create a new sales tax exemption for many digital goods, including “software as a service” (Office 365, QuickBooks, TurboTax).

These are products, not services, and are the largest and fastest-growing sector of the digital economy. The JLBC's fiscal analysis from last year [estimated](#) the loss at \$120 million every year — and with 42% of our General Fund going to K-12 education, this

is a HUGE cut.

As digital goods continue to grow in use and popularity, [the cost of Ugenti-Rita's exemption is likely to rise](#).

SB 1485



Support

Technical Correction; Tax Correction
Striker Capping STO Growth
Sen. JD Mesnard

SB1485 now contains a striker that would end the 20% annual automatic growth of corporate private school tax credits (STOs) by gradually decreasing the cap to 2% or inflation over the next 5 years.

Over the next 5 years the bill [would keep up to \\$263 million](#) in the general fund which would otherwise be diverted to private schools.

Slowing the growth of this tax credit is critical, as it is on pace to [double every four years](#) unless state lawmakers take action.

veto measures that have broad support.

A [nearly identical measure](#) was proposed two years ago but did not pass. See mirror bill [HCR2005](#), sponsored by Rep. John Kavanagh.

SB 1395



Oppose

Empowerment Scholarship Accounts; Program Revisions Expands ESA Eligibility, Reduces Expenditure Accountability
Sen. Sylvia Allen

Would significantly expand the ways parents can spend tax dollars via Empowerment Scholarship Accounts (ESA vouchers), mandate the Department of Education immediately contracts financial management to a for-profit vendor and more, all without adding greater transparency or accountability.

Given the Superintendent of Public Instruction has a newly-formed bipartisan ESA Task Force, it's best to allow that body of stakeholders to study and advise on how to improve the ESA program for current families and taxpayers alike.

SCR 1023



Oppose

Initiative; Referendum; Signatures; Legislative Districts Undermines Arizona's Citizen Initiative Process
Sen. Sine Kerr

Would essentially doom the citizen initiative process in Arizona, especially for grassroots groups like SOS AZ.

It [restricts Arizona's initiative process](#) by requiring ballot measures to collect signatures from a percentage of voters in each of Arizona's 30 legislative districts: 10% for initiatives and 15% for a constitutional amendment.

This would effectively give any single legislative district veto powers over the rest, allowing a small minority (the most conservative or liberal area in the state) to

HCR 2005



Oppose

Initiative; Referendum; Signatures; Legislative Districts Require Ballot Measures to Collect Signatures in All Districts
Rep. John Kavanagh

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See mirror bill [SCR1023](#), sponsored by Sen. Sine Kerr.

301 Bills



Neutral

**SB1080, SCR1011
HB2563, HCR2024
Prop. 301 Increase Package Bills
Multiple Prime Sponsors**

A mirrored package of bills sponsored by Michelle Udall, Kate Brophy McGee, and Sylvia Allen, contain a voter referendum to increase Proposition 301, Arizona's education sales tax, by 0.4¢ to a full penny.

If passed by voters on the general election ballot in November 2020, the bills 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.

We will keep you updated on our position as the bills advance



CLICK HERE
to read last week's SOSAZ Legislative Report.



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Strong Schools,
Strong State
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Save Our Schools Arizona

2019 Education Roadshow



Learn about Arizona's classroom crisis, connect the dots about exactly how we got here, and learn more about what you can do to get involved.

If you'd like to schedule an informative, fact-based, non-partisan presentation to learn SO much more, get answers to questions about school funding and privatization, and meet fellow education advocates who want to Save Our Schools in 2019 and beyond, [then click here!](#)

We will arrange a presenter to come to you wherever you'd like to gather friends and concerned citizens, around your kitchen table or at a local community center.

RTS

CLICK HERE



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



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