



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - First General Session

March 17, 2019

Save Our Schools Arizona Celebrates National Public Schools Week

First, we have some exciting news and we want you to be the first to know: Save our Schools Arizona will be celebrating National Public Schools Week, March 25-29, with some inaugural events aimed at celebrating Arizona's amazing public school educators, students, families and supporters. We are piloting our "Take Your Senator to School" event wherein the majority of our state senators are going to a public school in their district to "shadow" a teacher and experience first-hand what we're so proud of and what we're challenged by. We'll also be asking Arizonans to share videos, photos and stories on social media of what makes YOU #PublicSchoolProud. Stay tuned for more details to help us celebrate our awesome public schools!

This week, we'll likely see a lot of "floor action" — lawmakers in both chambers debating and voting on bills. The deadline to get bills heard in the other chamber's committees is March 29. Watch this week for lists of bills to be heard to get long and nights to get longer as lawmakers rush to beat the clock.

Two bills we're tracking are moving this week: SB1451, which adds extra burdens for signature gatherers and would make citizen-led efforts like our No on Prop 305 all but impossible. Join us in [House Elections](#) on Tuesday at 2 PM to speak up against that bill! The other bill, SB1485, reduces the automatic 20% growth of STO vouchers and [keeps \\$263 million](#) in the general fund (which could be used to fund our public schools!). It passed the Senate unanimously two weeks ago, and we have high hopes for similar success in the House.

BILL WATCH LIST + STATUS *as of March 18*

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

Calls to Action!



Oppose SB1395

Continue to contact YOUR senator to oppose SB1395:

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



Support HB2187

Contact Appropriations Chairman Sen. Gowan to hear HB2187: dgowan@AzLeg.gov / 602-926-5154

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



Support SB1485

Use RTS & contact the members of House Ways & Means to support SB1485:

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

Chairman Ben Toma 602-926-3298 / BToma@AzLeg.gov

Vice Chair Shawna Bolick 602-926-3244 /

SBolick@AzLeg.gov

Rep. Regina Cobb 602-926-3126 / RCobb@AzLeg.gov

Timothy N. Dunn 602-926-4139 / TDunn@AzLeg.gov

Travis Grantham 602-926-4868 / TGrantham@AzLeg.gov

Joanne Osborne 602-926-3181 / JOsborne@AzLeg.gov

Andres Cano 602-926-3027 / ACano@AzLeg.gov

Mitzi Epstein 602-926-4870 / MEpstein@AzLeg.gov

Pamela Powers Hannley 602-926-4848 /

PPowersHannley@AzLeg.gov

Lorenzo Sierra 602-926-3211 / LSierra@AzLeg.gov



Oppose SB1451

Use RTS & contact the members of House Elections to oppose SB1451:

- This is an attack on grassroots political efforts in our state
- It rigs the system so only the already-powerful can succeed

Chairman Kelly Townsend 602-926-4467 /

KTownsend@AzLeg.gov

Vice Chairman Frank Carroll 602-926-3249 /

FCarroll@AzLeg.gov

John Fillmore 602-926-3187 / JFillmore@AzLeg.gov

Bob Thorpe 602-926-5219 / BThorpe@AzLeg.gov

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Shawna Bolick 602-926-3244 / SBolick@AzLeg.gov

Jennifer Jermaine 602-926-3199 / JJermaine@AzLeg.gov

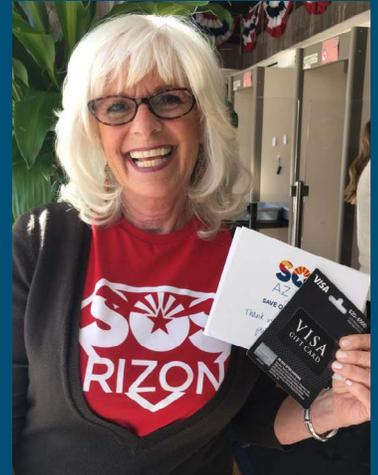
Diego Rodriguez 602-926-3285 / DRodriguez@AzLeg.gov

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Raquel Terán 602-926-3308 / RTeran@AzLeg.gov

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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.

special services, cutting into regular education needs such as class sizes, support staff, and salaries.

Schools could apply for multiple grants with a maximum of \$200,000 per school year.

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 1230



Support

Extraordinary Special Education Needs Fund Appropriates \$5 Million to Fund Special Education Grants for Public Schools Sen. Sylvia Allen

Would appropriate \$5 million for grants from the Department of Education to public district and charter schools that serve students with extraordinary special education needs.

Arizona’s exceptional-needs fund has remained dormant for years because lawmakers swept funding and never restored it. It would help small districts cover the high cost of educating one or two high-need students.

Currently, many schools must dip into their general classroom funds to fund

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 that 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 Reduces ESA 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

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

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 veto measures that have broad support.

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.



SAVE OUR SCHOOLS
Strong Schools,
Strong State
PAID FOR BY SAVE OUR SCHOOLS ARIZONA

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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