



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - First General Session

April 21, 2019

Budget Talks Continue, Bills Moving Slowly

Monday marks Day 99 of the legislative session, and with 281 bills still alive, the Legislature’s pace has slowed to a crawl. Budget negotiations continue behind closed doors, but there’s no deal in sight.

Disagreements over the Rainy Day Fund and tax conformity are [consuming budget discussions](#). Some lawmakers remain unhappy with [Gov. Ducey’s conformity plan](#) (which uses this year’s printed forms to garner Arizona an extra \$200 million in revenue) and continue to negotiate for a deal, which could reduce the projected \$900 million surplus. Gov. Ducey also wants to boost the state’s rainy day fund balance to \$1 billion this year. In principle, lawmakers from both parties say saving is a good idea, but many feel Ducey’s \$500 million dollar amount is excessive. The governor feels strongly about saving and says he plans to [wait for lawmakers to change their minds](#). With many priorities to fund, including public education, lawmakers have lots of work to do before they can produce a budget — stay tuned for updates and calls to action as this develops!



Members of the Save Our Schools Arizona board of directors at a local engineering firm that knows public schools are essential to thriving businesses.

The STO Cap bill (SB1485) continues to progress; the bill passed through the House last week. While there was some discussion of a more accelerated cap, that idea lacks the votes to pass. We support the bill as-is because it’s important lawmakers act to moderate the skyrocketing cost of private school tax credits. SB1485 would keep over a quarter billion dollars in the state’s General Fund over the next five years, while capping the bill more quickly would save only an extra \$50 million over the next five years. Help keep up the momentum by contacting your House representatives to ask for their SUPPORT when the bill comes up for its final “third read” vote.

SOS ARIZONA | **SAVE OUR SCHOOLS**
Strong Schools, Strong State

Call to ACTION!!!

Contact Your 2 Representatives 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
- There is wide bipartisan agreement on the merits of this bill

SOS ARIZONA | **SAVE OUR SCHOOLS**
Strong Schools, Strong State

Call to ACTION!!!

Contact Your 2 Representatives 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

BILL WATCH LIST + STATUS as of April 21

Many of these are identical, also called “mirror,” bills (marked with 🔄). This process, known as “fast-tracking,” involves hearing identical bills in committee in each chamber, then substituting them for each other when it’s time for a floor vote. (SOSAZ longtimers will recognize this as the process used in 2017 to advance SB1431, the bill that became Prop 305.)

SB1149	(S/E: student suspension; admission) Waiting for House COW
SB1230	(extraordinary special education needs fund) Waiting for House Rules
SB1451	(statewide ballot measures; circulators; procedures) Waiting for House COW
SB1485	(school tuition organization; inflator) Waiting for House 3rd read
SCR1023	(initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts) 🔄 Waiting for Senate COW
HCR2005	(initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts) 🔄 Waiting for House caucus
SB1080	(TPT; use tax; education) 🔄 Waiting for Senate 3rd read
HB2563	(education funding; use tax; TPT) 🔄 Waiting for House caucus
SCR1011	(TPT; use tax; education) 🔄 Waiting for Senate 3rd read
HCR2024	(TPT and use tax; education) 🔄 Waiting for House Rules

SB 1149



Oppose

**Tax Credit Review; Evaluation Standard
Striker to Allow Discriminatory Admission Policies for Districts**
Sen. Rick Gray

SB1149 is now subject to a *striker* from John Allen (R-15) that would permit a district to refuse to admit a pupil who is currently or in the process of being suspended from another school.

Kids of color, kids with special needs, and kids with emotional differences are already suspended at [statistically much higher rates](#). Welcoming and serving every child is a fundamental value of public education. Even children with challenges have a right to public education (and appropriate counseling/developmental services and supports) that help them succeed.

Public schools should never turn their back on Arizona’s children. Ready for House COW.

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 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.

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

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!

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 veto measures that have broad support.

See mirror bill [HCR2005](#), sponsored by John Kavanaugh.

HCR 2005



Oppose

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

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.

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.