



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - First General Session

May 12, 2019

Bad Ballot Bills Still Breathing But Vulnerable

Save Our Schools Arizona has voiced major opposition to **SB1451**, which passed the House last week by a single vote. Fortunately, the bill was amended to remove the requirement that petitions be grouped by circulator. This is definitely a win for grassroots groups like ours! But the bill was also amended to give the Attorney General sole authority to write descriptions for ballot measures, doing away with the system of checks and balances that already exists. This means what voters read on their ballot could be written in a biased way to sway public opinion for or against a measure. The amended version now goes back to the Senate for a final vote, which means we have ONE more chance to kill it: Contact your senator asking them to OPPOSE SB1451!

We also saw movement this week on mirror bills **HCR2005** and **SCR1023**, which had been stalled for two months and were assumed dead. These bills would require signatures on petitions from a percentage of voters in each of Arizona’s 30 legislative districts. Because 85% of voters live in Maricopa and Pima counties, such a measure would likely sound the death knell for Arizona’s direct democracy process. Both the House and Senate scheduled floor debate of these bills for Wednesday, but later held them, in large part due to your engagement. Sources tell us the phones were ringing off the hook! However, powerful interests continue to push behind the scenes to get the bills moving again, so continue to contact your senator and representatives to oppose both bills.

And there’s good news too: SB1485 , which will cap private school tax credits to save the General Fund a quarter-billion dollars over the next 5 years, is up for a final vote on Monday. Call your House representatives before 1 pm on Monday to urge them to support this fiscally responsible, bipartisan bill.

Join Us for the Budget Hearings

We’re continuing watch in the House and Senate galleries for a budget, which may be closer than anyone thinks: the movement we are currently seeing on long-dormant bills is typical of the end of session. As talks ramp up, join us for SOSAZ Budget Watch to remind our lawmakers that we are watching and that the community wants its public schools funded:



[Monday, House 1 pm, Senate 1:30 pm](#)

[Tuesday, House 10 am, Senate*](#)

[Wednesday, House 10 am, Senate*](#)

[Thursday, House 10 am, Senate*](#)

[Here’s how to get there and where to park](#)

***The Senate Calendar is not available yet. Please check with us on Facebook on Monday for updates.
Times Subject to Change**

Visit
Save Our Schools Arizona
on Facebook



Calls to Action!



Oppose SB1349

Contact your senator to oppose SB1349:

- Directly contradicts bipartisan agreement that public schools need more funding, not less
- Harms district and charter schools by reducing the budget from which they are funded
- Has the potential to become another runaway STO train by starting small but eventually growing into a multi-million dollar drain on the state budget, as is already the case in Indiana and other states



Oppose SB1451

Contact your two 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



Oppose SCR1023 & HCR2005

Contact your two senators & representatives to oppose SCR1023 & HCR2005:

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



Support SB1485

Contact your two representatives and ask them 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

BILL WATCH LIST + STATUS as of May 12

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 become Prop 305.)

SB1149	(S/E: student suspension; admission) Waiting for House COW
SB1230	(extraordinary special education needs fund) Waiting for House Rules
SB1349	(family college savings program) Ready for Senate final read
SB1451	(statewide ballot measures; circulators; procedures) Ready for Senate final vote
SB1485	(school tuition organization; inflator) Scheduled 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 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.

SB 1349



Oppose

Family College Savings Program Allows College Savings Accounts to Be Spent on Private K-12 School Tuition Sen. David Livingston

Would create a new way to keep tax dollars out of the state's general fund by encouraging Arizona families to spend their 529 savings on K-12 private school tuition and expenses (up to \$10,000 per account per year!) instead of saving for college, as the accounts are intended.

Tuition at Arizona universities has more than doubled over the last 10 years, making this a fiscally irresponsible solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

Families have many options for supplementing K-12 private school tuition and expenses, but SB1349 encourages them to accumulate college debt, a far bigger burden on the buying power of young families. Ready for Senate final read.

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 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.

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.

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

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Schools
Arizona**

