



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - First General Session

May 5, 2019

#ThankATeacher During Appreciation Week

Let's celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week! As we honor our educators' creativity, dedication, skill and passion, we can't forget that in a state which chronically underfunds public education, these amazing educators deserve better! Our classrooms remain in desperate need of resources. We can appreciate educators best by providing them with reasonable class sizes, well-supplied classrooms, adequately paid support staff, and other policies that allow them to focus on their true job: teaching.

This week, we encourage you to #ThankATeacher by asking your state lawmakers to #FundOurSchools, and post your ask on social media. For extra credit, post and email a different ask EVERY DAY.

Join Us for the Budget Hearings

As the budget comes together, we continue standing watch in the Senate and House galleries to remind lawmakers Arizona voters support public schools and want them funded. Join us as often as you can, wear your SOSAZ red and bring friends!



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

[Tuesday, House 10 am, Senate 1 pm](#)

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

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

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

Times Subject to Change

Anti-voter **SB1451** has been scheduled 5 times in the last month but held each time, in large part due to your engagement! The bill could return to the House floor with amendments this week. The requirement that all petitions for statewide initiatives be either grouped by circulator or thrown out would place a huge administrative burden on campaigns. Opponents of citizen initiatives could cite the bill in court to disqualify entire signature sheets, further raising the already prohibitive expense for citizens to place measures on the ballot. Your calls have played a huge role in helping stop this bill, so keep the pressure on.

We're also now tracking **SB1349**. With the innocent-sounding title "Family College Savings Program," it flew under our radar, but when we took a closer look, we realized this program was introducing private school vouchers by another name. This bill creates a new way to keep tax dollars out of the state's general fund by incentivizing Arizona families to spend their 529 savings on K-12 private school tuition and expenses instead of saving for college. This new tax shelter could lead to nearly a half-million dollar annual hit to the state General Fund (reducing the funds available for public education). It has already passed Senate and House and is now back in the Senate for a final vote, which means we have only this one chance to stop it. Call and email your senator and ask for a NO on SB1349, then use "[RTS 2.0](#)" to enter AGAINST SB1349 (Request to Speak -> My Bill Positions -> Enter Bill Number, select bill, then click AGAINST).

Calls to Action!



Oppose SB1349

Contact your senator to oppose SB1349:

- Encourages families to spend their savings now, instead of setting money aside for the skyrocketing costs of college (in a state where tuition has more than doubled over the last 10 years)
- While families already have many options for supplementing private school tuition and expenses, SB1349 encourages them to accumulate college debt, which is a far bigger burden on the buying power of young families
- Directly contradicts recent bipartisan agreement that public and charter schools need more funding, not less
- Harms district and charter schools by reducing the budget from which they are funded
- No requirement or need for Arizona to mirror this federal law
- Fiscally irresponsible solution to a problem that doesn't exist - this is a national "school choice" initiative, not a local effort by Arizona families



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



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 5

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
SB1349	(family college savings program)	Ready for Senate final read
SB1451	(statewide ballot measures; circulators; procedures)	Ready 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 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**

