



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - 2nd Gen. Session

Vol. 2, Issue 3 • Week of January 27, 2020

Legislature Attempts Yet Another ESA Voucher Expansion – Sending AZ Tax Dollars to Private Schools in Other States

They're at it again! As promised by the governor, **we now have this year's first ESA voucher expansion.** Senate Bill 1224 aims to expand ESA vouchers across state lines, which would make Arizona the first state in the nation to allow tax dollars to pay for private, religious schools in other states. The bill has been assigned to the Senate Education Committee, which meets Tuesdays at 2 p.m., but it is not yet on an agenda.

This effort is misguided and detrimental to Arizona communities and taxpayers who want Arizona tax dollars to fund Arizona schools. The existing ESA voucher program costs the state of Arizona more than \$110 million per year in state funding redirected from Arizona district and charter schools to fund Arizona private education. It is shameful that Arizona lawmakers would champion sending Arizona tax dollars out of state when Arizona ranks at the bottom nationwide for teacher pay (49th), per-student investment (46th), teacher retention (50th) and classroom overcrowding (49th).

Senate Bill 1224 is a throwback to the incrementalist approach used by the national privatization lobby, which is how ESA vouchers began in 2011 for children with special needs. From the start, anti-public education forces have followed the same game plan: identify a sympathetic population, demand ESA vouchers “just for this small group” and once they’ve sealed the deal, identify the next “small group” to justify constant expansion. Before we formed SOSAZ in 2017, this approach worked: pro-voucher forces successfully expanded the program to more “small groups” every year for 6 years in a row, their ultimate goal being gutting the public education system through vouchers-for-all. Thanks to our statewide volunteer network and millions of Arizona voters who value public education and tax dollar accountability, we stopped them in 2017, 2018, 2019, and now it’s time to do it again in 2020.

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

Call to ACTION!!!

Oppose SB1224
Oppose out of state
ESA voucher expansion

📞 Call Sen. Sylvia Allen at (602)926-5409
✉️ Email her at SAllen@AZLeg.gov

📞 Call Pres. Karen Fann at (602)926-5300
✉️ Email her at KFann@AZLeg.gov

📞 Call & ✉️ email your local Senator and speak **AGAINST** SB1224



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@arizona_sos

The truth is, Arizona voters do not want our tax dollars leaving Arizona to subsidize private schools in California, Colorado and beyond. Arizona lawmakers should focus on reinvesting locally so that every Arizona student can choose a high-quality education within our own borders. No Arizona student should have to leave the state to get a great education. Read on to find out what you can do!

Call to Action!



**Oppose
SB1224**

- **Contact the bill's sponsor, Sen. Sylvia Allen** (602-926-5409 / SAllen@AZLeg.gov)
- **Contact Senate President Karen Fann** (602-926-5300 / KFann@AZLeg.gov)
- **Contact your senator** and ask them to oppose SB1224
- **Use "My Bill Positions"** to give SB1224 a simple thumbs down. ([Here's how!](#))

Bills we're watching:

SB 1048



Support

Schools; Employees; Employment; Discipline

Tracks school personnel, keeps disciplined staff from being rehired

Sen. Kate Brophy McGee

This bill would develop a system under which the Arizona Department of Education could investigate uncertified educators, both district and charter, and ban them from being rehired at other publicly-funded schools for at least 5 years. Fewer than 0.08% of Arizona teachers each year currently fall into this category, but there [now exists no mechanism](#) to track non-certificated school personnel and keep them from being rehired. About 40% of teachers in charter schools are not certified. A good first step toward keeping students safer. Scheduled for Senate Education Committee, Tuesday.

Sample Bill

LEGEND

Bill Number

SOS Bill Position

Indicated by colored markers:



Support



Neutral



Oppose

Bill Title and Primary Sponsor
Official Title in Grey
Descriptive Title in Black

Bill Description

SOS Recommended RTS Comments

HB 2022  Oppose

Empowerment Scholarships; Financial Oversight; Treasurer Transfer Financial Oversight of ESA Voucher Program Solely to Treasurer
Rep. Mark Finchem

Reduces financial oversight in Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Accounts vouchers by giving the Treasurer the sole authority to enter contracts with payment processing vendors for the program. This means the Treasurer alone could determine what information they want the payment processing vendor to track, potentially limiting the ability to effectively monitor the spending within the ESA voucher program for fraud or other mispending. The Department of Education would be limited in their ability to identify what kind of information is necessary from the payment processing vendor to properly audit the program.

It is fiscally irresponsible to decrease the potential oversight of a program where families are given public funds on debit cards and then expected to spend that money responsibly. Even though the majority of ESA voucher

In this week's edition, we are adding Monitor to our legend. This means we are watching this bill but haven't yet taken a position.



Monitor

SB 1059



Monitor

TPT; Use tax; Education Sets up new revenue distributions for education, conditional on ballot passage of SCR1002 in November
Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would give schools more flexibility in how they spend the money given to them through the Classroom Site Fund. Currently schools are limited to spending it on Maintenance & Operations. The bill would allow funding to go toward: teacher compensation; educational interventions; voluntary full-day K; student support services; tutoring; character education; school safety; CTE; public accountability compliance; and transportation. 75% of the funding would go to the Classroom Site Fund (the first \$86M of that to ADE for basic state aid); 20% to Arizona Board of Regents to subsidize in-state tuition (the first \$78M of that to universities' Technology and Research Initiative Fund with a 2% escalator for inflation starting in FY 2023); and 5% to community colleges based on their full-time student enrollment (the first \$1.5M going to their trade and workforce development programs). MONITORING.

SB 1060



Support

Special Education; Group B Weights
Allows districts to apply for grants for ultra high cost students
Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would allow school districts to request extra funding from the Dept. of Ed.'s Extraordinary Special Education Needs Fund for students whose education costs more than 3 times the statewide per-pupil funding average. The bill also contains modest increases for a few special education weights: Speech Language Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Self-Contained Severe Intellectual Disability. It's far from enough, but a good start toward better funding for students with special needs, the vast majority of whom choose public schools. Scheduled for Senate Education Committee, Tuesday.



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to read last
week's SOSAZ
Legislative
Report.

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Save Our Schools
Arizona**



SB 1234



Support

Additional assistance; restoration Accelerates DAA restoration for FY2020-21

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would invest \$135 million of the state’s current budget surplus toward restoring [District and Charter Additional Assistance](#), which was severely cut during the last recession and still not fully restored. DAA and CAA are flexible funding for district and charter schools that can be used for building improvements, textbooks, classroom materials and technology, as well as to supplement staff salaries. With schools statewide in crisis, the money can’t come soon enough. Lack of funding to properly maintain and replace equipment and infrastructure [may ultimately cost the state more](#) than if schools had been adequately funded all along.

SCR 1002



Monitor

Education; TPT; Use Tax Increases sales tax funding for education by 0.4¢

Sen. Kate Brophy McGee

This bill would [ask voters to increase the Prop 301 sales tax](#) permanently from its current 0.6¢ to a full penny. Such a move would add [\\$400 million a year in new money](#) for education. The dollar amount is far from enough to address our school funding crisis, and the sales tax increase [would vault Arizona](#) to one of the highest rates in the nation. Arizona currently has a billion-dollar budget surplus, with another billion in the Rainy Day Fund. Lawmakers have the power to solve our classroom crisis with the stroke of a pen. SOSAZ would like to see funding sources beyond just sales tax, a full restoration of [funding cuts](#), and bipartisan collaboration toward solving our state’s education funding crisis. Scheduled for Senate Education Committee, Tuesday.



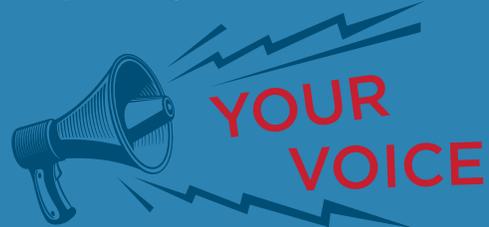
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RTS

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



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