



SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - 2nd Gen. Session

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Voucher Expansion PASSES, the only way to stop it now is the Save Our Schools Act

VOTE **YES** ON NOV. 3!

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS ACT

- ✓ Protects AZ taxpayers' investment in public education
- ✓ Limits the private school voucher program, prioritizing special needs students
- ✓ Adds accountability and oversight of state spending

Learn more at YesSOSAZ.com

On Thursday, the House voted along party lines to pass SB1224, sending your Arizona tax dollars to subsidize private, religious schools in Utah, California, New Mexico, Colorado and Nevada. Every dollar of this ESA voucher expansion is a dollar cut from an Arizona public school. Is this betrayal of Arizona families what your tax dollars are for?

The debate was some of the nastiest we've witnessed in four years of watching education debates at the Legislature. Again and again, the majority party shut down requests to consider bipartisan compromises, even voting against discussion of false testimony given by a pro-voucher lobbyist in committee the previous day. As one reporter observed on Twitter, "One almost gets the sense that House Republicans don't want to talk about the amendment that their colleagues rejected yesterday that would have addressed these ESA students without expanding the program."

The worst part is, the pro-voucher lobby that fuels this hostility for taxpayers and public education is NOT going away. We knew they would try again last year and they did, unsuccessfully. We knew they'd try again this year and they did, but this time it is headed for the governor's desk. They will never stop trying unless WE remove the option to keep trying. There's ONE way left to block this abuse of taxpayer funds: help put the Save Our Schools Act on the November ballot. The SOS Act will permanently reform and limit the private school voucher program in Arizona, keeping Arizona dollars in Arizona schools for good. Find a petition to sign or circulate at YesSOSAZ.com/petitions. Petitions can be sent [via mail](#) or picked up all over the state from our network of depots.



sosarizona.org



[/SaveOurSchoolsArizona](https://www.facebook.com/SaveOurSchoolsArizona)



[@arizona_sos](https://twitter.com/arizona_sos)

CALL TO ACTION: Stop fraud and abuse with the Save Our Schools Act!

Due to shutdowns, our volunteers cannot be out en masse collecting signatures. **We are relying on YOU to ask your circle of friends, family and neighbors to sign TODAY.** We will mail you petitions; [fill out our mail form](#) and we'll ship them to you right away. Or, contact a [Petition Captain or Depot](#) near you to get petitions and get started. The signatures are easy to collect; everyone wants to support public education! We need 350,000 signatures by the end of June; EVERY SIGNATURE COUNTS. We cannot do this without you, and we must do this now to protect public schools in our state for good.

COVID-19 Precaution

If you're considering going to the Capitol, be advised: Due to health concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the House and Senate galleries are now closed to the public, as are most committee hearings. [RTS](#) remains available, and hearings and floor debate are [streamed live](#). Lawmakers are considering [taking a several-week break](#), so stay tuned.

Bills in motion:

RTS SB 1177



Support

appropriation; Ganado School Loop Road

Allots \$900,000 for repairs to Ganado School Loop Road in northeastern AZ

Sen. Jamescita Peshlakai

The Ganado School Loop Road, built in 1991, hasn't been maintained or upgraded for 27 years. It is the only point of access both to the K-12 schools for 1,388 students and 93 teachers and for the community hospital, as well as for the school buses, parents and community members. The road is hazardous in winter snow and turns to mud in the spring, and the poor drainage is eating away at neighboring farmlands. The requested funding would also add a sidewalk and other safety mechanisms, as the vast majority of Ganado students walk to school. The county will fund \$400,000 toward the road's repair; this type of matching funding is rare. Scheduled for House Transportation, Wednesday. See mirror bill **HB2198** (sponsor: Rep. Arlando Teller).

2020 Session Timeline

Monday, 2/24 Crossover Week begins; the expected start of this year's budget bill work

Friday, 3/27 Last day for a bill to get out of committees in its crossover house

Friday, 4/17 Last day for conference committees, which iron out differences in bill versions passed by separate houses (date set by legislative rule; can be changed)

Saturday, 4/25 100th Day of Session (the magic ending point we hope for; can be changed)

Help Support Our Work:

**Donate to
Save Our Schools
Arizona**



RTS SB 1357



Oppose

schools; access; instructional materials; review
Limit individualized support and responsive teaching in district and charter schools

Sen. Sylvia Allen

This bill would add significant bureaucracy by requiring all district and charter books, instructional aides, mandatory and optional reading materials to be pre-approved the year before school starts, even before teachers meet their students. It would eliminate teachers' ability to work with parents and specialists to assist struggling students, making it illegal for district and charter teachers to give students individually tailored support, including gifted students and special needs students. With responsive, individualized instruction often cited as a reason parents support "school choice," this bill suggests the 95% of Arizona students in district and charter schools don't warrant the same responsive teaching as their private school peers. Passed the Senate Education Committee with the sponsor promising to amend the bill to address educator concerns, but the changes made have not done so. Scheduled for House Education, Monday.

RTS SB 1491



Support

literacy; dyslexia; screening; appropriations
Funds dyslexia support and teacher training

Sen. Paul Boyer

This bill would implement the recommendations of the interim committee which studied this issue, give schools an extra year to implement the requirements for dyslexia support and teacher training passed last year, and appropriate \$1 million in FY 2021 to fund those efforts. Scheduled for House Education, Monday.

RTS HCR 2032



Oppose

initiatives; single subject; title
Requires ballot initiatives to hew to a single subject

Rep. Anthony Kern

Would ask voters to amend Arizona's Constitution to require initiatives be limited to a single subject expressed in the title; if it's not in the title it's void. In 2017, the Arizona Chamber of Commerce sued to knock the minimum wage increase initiative off the ballot, arguing that its dual wage and sick leave provisions violated the single-subject rule. The Arizona Supreme Court rejected that argument, saying voters could do as they liked. If passed, this bill would restrict voters' ability to make their own laws. Passed the House on party lines; awaits Senate Rules Committee.

RTS HCR 2039



Oppose

initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts
Requires an equal percentage of ballot signatures from each legislative district

Rep. Mark Finchem

Would require signatures on initiative and referendum petitions come 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. Lawmakers also floated this proposal last year; it was incredibly unpopular with average citizens but had powerful interests pushing hard for it behind the scenes. Scheduled for Senate Judiciary Committee, Thursday.

