



# SOSAZ Legislative Report

Fifty-Fourth Legislature - 2<sup>nd</sup> Gen. Session

Vol. 2, Issue 11 • Week of March 23, 2020

## Governor signs out-of-state voucher expansion Legislature recesses after passing “skinny budget” More than ever, we must work to Save Our Schools

On Monday, the House [gave final approval](#) to a so-called “skinny budget,” a bare-bones spending plan that ensures continued operation of state government beyond June 30 and also appropriates \$50 million for COVID-19 relief programs. The bills have been transmitted to the governor for his signature. The Legislature now stands recessed until Monday, April 13, unless the Senate President and House Speaker agree to reconvene earlier.

On Friday, Governor Ducey signed out-of-state voucher expansion bill SB1224 — meaning our legislature has seen fit to divert our tax dollars (which are more precious now than ever before) to private schools in other states, but not to tackle priorities such as badly needed special education funding, gifted funding, or the restoration of District Additional Assistance to 2008 levels.

Lawmakers are clearly hoping to return once the crisis abates, waive certain rules, and return to their previous legislative priorities. Some observers are suggesting that an early budget means the 2020 session is [basically over](#), but both chambers have approved remote voting, so all the bills we were watching before are still in play.

Meanwhile, the magnitude of the [coming economic crisis](#) is impossible to overstate. We will be watching for attempts to further cut public education funding and prop up more privatization schemes. Stay tuned and be ready to engage when and how we safely can.

What we CAN do in the meantime is support the Save Our Schools Act. If you haven’t already, request a petition by mail, donate to our eventual return to traditional circulating, or volunteer to spread the word in other ways, all at [YesSOSAZ.com](#).



**SAVE OUR SCHOOLS ACT**

-  Request petition by mail
-  Free Ed Facts webinar
-  Sign petition near you



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## **CALLS TO ACTION:**

1. We are still committed to stopping reckless ESA voucher expansion and protecting Arizona tax dollars with the Save Our Schools Act. With the careful processes we've developed, almost everyone can still do our part to save our schools while staying safe inside. [Request a petition packet](#) mailed to you for the family members, coworkers and friends you're still seeing within the confines of social distancing precautions, or contact a [Petition Captain or Depot](#) near you to get started. We'll help you get them notarized and returned safely and efficiently.
2. Contact your own senator and representatives to keep the pressure on to prioritize education funding restoration once the legislature reconvenes.

## **Bills in motion:**

### **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. Awaiting House committee action. See mirror bill **HB2198** (sponsor: Rep. Arlando Teller).

### **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. Awaiting House committee action.

# 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 mil-lion in FY 2021 to fund those efforts. Awaiting House committee action.

# 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.

# 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.

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