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Caucus Newsletter

57th Legislature, 1st Regular Session



Arizona State Senate Republican Caucus

Weekly Newsletter

Welcome to the Official Arizona Senate Republican Caucus Newsletter! This week was “crossover week” at the Legislature, where most Senate bills are voted out of the chamber then sent to the House for consideration, and the same happens with House bills being voted on and sent to the Senate for consideration.





AZ ICE Act Passes Senate

By President Warren Petersen

I'm pleased to report the AZ ICE Act, SB 1164, passed the Senate this week with full Republican support. Arizonans are looking to their leaders to protect them from the dangers of illegal immigration, and the state legislature is again answering the call. It is vital that Arizona law enforcement agencies are unleashed to join the Trump administration's valiant efforts to secure our border and safeguard our communities. As Arizonans know, this issue of illegal immigration isn't political in nature, and all government officials must do the right thing to defend lives and livelihoods of all the citizens they represent. I'm grateful for the input we received for this legislation from local law enforcement around the state, especially the Arizona Sheriffs' Association, led by Yavapai County Sheriff David Rhodes. I'm also thankful for the support from my colleagues in the Legislature. I'm hopeful that Governor Hobbs is listening to her constituents and will sign this bill when it reaches her desk.



Examining State-Funded Healthcare for Illegal Aliens

By Senator Wendy Rogers

In an attempt to shine a light on state-funded healthcare for illegal aliens, I am sponsoring a transparency measure that advanced to the House after passing the Senate this week. SB 1268 aims to support the Trump Administration's efforts to expose government waste and combat the crisis of illegal immigration by evaluating the impact illegal aliens have on hospitals, taxpayers, and Medicaid programs. SB 1268 requires hospitals to include a section on their patient admission form that asks individuals to indicate whether they are lawfully present in the US. The form will also include a statement assuring patients that their response will not affect the care they receive, nor will they be reported to immigration authorities. When the Biden Administration rolled out the red carpet for illegal immigrants, our nation and our state became overwhelmed with treating patients who should not be living here in the first place, compromising the healthcare for our law-abiding citizens. I will continue to advocate for this bill as it moves through the legislative process.

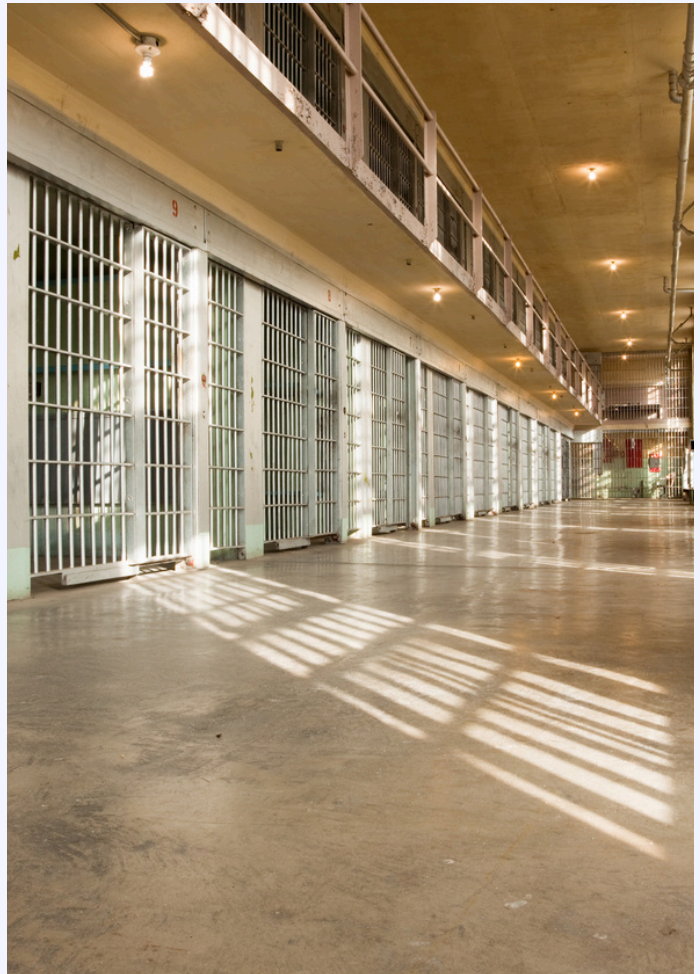




Supporting Public Safety Officers

By Senator Kevin Payne

As Chairman for the Senate Committee on Public Safety, providing our men and women in law enforcement with the resources they need to keep our communities safe is a top priority of mine. I also want to ensure they are compensated appropriately for their hard work. I sponsored a number of bills this year to address these issues. SB 1010 provides 20% pay raises to correctional officers and 10% pay raises for all other staff at the Arizona Department of Corrections. This bill passed out of the Senate with bipartisan support and was sent to the House for consideration. Once the bill passes the full Legislature, it will then be considered within the bigger picture of our state budget. Depending on what other funding priorities are presented, the actual raise percentage may fluctuate up or down. I do know this is a priority for both Republicans, Democrats, and the Governor, so I'm optimistic we can come to a consensus. SB 1144 passed the Senate as well with bipartisan support. This bill allows Maricopa County to ask voters to extend the jail excise tax. This one fifth-cent sales tax has been in place for three decades, and the funding goes towards keeping our adult jails and juvenile detention facilities operating, so the individuals housed here are not released into communities, as well as to pay for any maintenance or renovations needed.

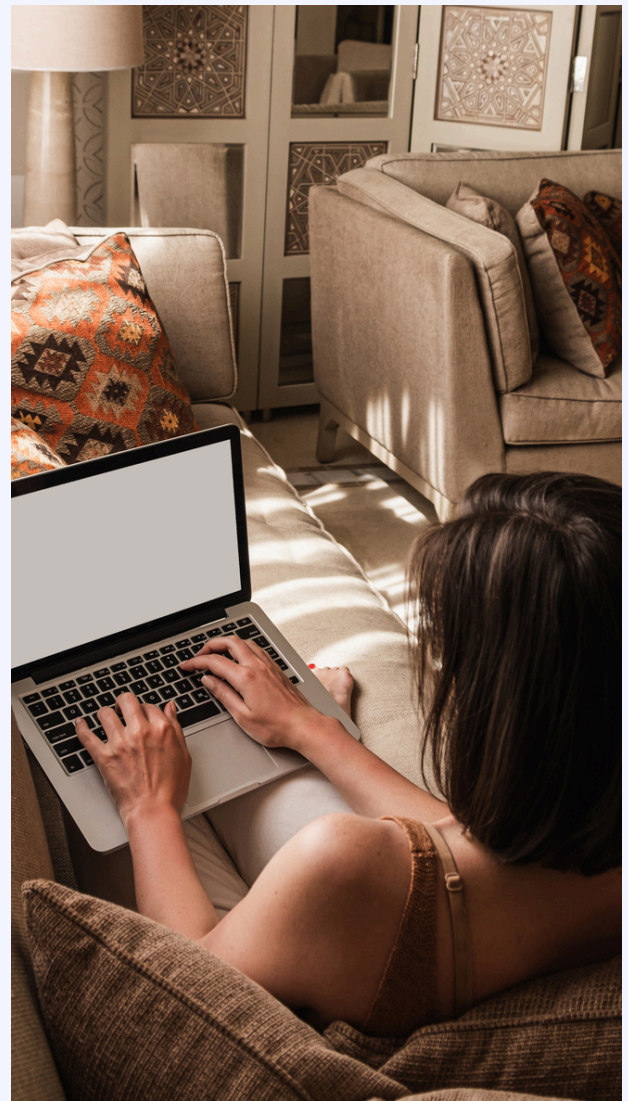




Demanding Accountability for Government Workers

By Senator Shawna Bolick

We have a number of state buildings that are being funded with taxpayer dollars. Allowing government employees to telework while cubicles and offices sit empty is a waste of public resources. If we aren't going to close these buildings, we need government workers to get off their sofas and head back into the office. The pandemic is over, and in-person collaboration between employees is key to a better work product, as well as higher productivity. Arizona's taxpayers deserve nothing less. President Petersen and I teamed up on an amendment to [SB 1237](#) to protect the stewardship of taxpayer dollars and provide accountability for government workers by prohibiting full-time state employees from telework. Exceptions are made for sick employees wishing to work from home with supervisor permission, as well as off-site work required within the employees' outlined duties. This bill passed out of the Senate with full Republican support. I'm hopeful the Governor will respect our public resources, and the taxpayer dollars that fund them, by signing this bill.



Protecting Arizonans from Incompetent Agency Directors

By Senator Jake Hoffman

We reconvened the Committee on Director Nominations this week and recommended confirmation for director nominee Michael Wisehart to lead the Arizona Department of Economic Security. During his hearing, troubling information came to light over how Katie Hobbs created a new position for a highly unqualified former director nominee for the Department of Veterans Services that she ended up demoting. Dana Allmond is being paid \$170,000 annually, the same salary she would have made as Director, but she is now a consultant for DES, duplicating work conducted at the Department of Veterans Services. This is a clear case of cronyism and another example of Hobbs using state government resources to reward her friends and family. The Senate also rejected from confirmation the director nominee for the Department of Housing, Joan Serviss, after she failed to resign amid serious findings of waste, fraud, and abuse of taxpayer dollars. We will continue to be Arizonans' last line of defense against Hobbs' radical and irresponsible agenda.



Addressing Fiscal Waste, Fraud, Abuse in District Schools

By Senator David Farnsworth

With rising concerns over fraud and abuse following the recent crisis with Isaac Elementary School district and their mismanagement of an estimated \$20 million in taxpayer dollars, Senator Carine Werner and I are responding with legislation to provide transparency and to encourage responsible school district spending. Two bills to address these issues passed out of the Senate and were transmitted to the House this week. I am sponsoring SB 1689 to require the Arizona Department of Education to notify the county superintendent and take necessary action if it's been determined that a school district overspent their budget. Additionally, Senator Werner's SB 1625 requires each school district to post a copy of the previous fiscal year's general ledger on their website by October 1 of each year, so the public may easily review it. The crisis with Isaac isn't isolated, as a number of districts are in similar financial situations, demonstrating failures in fiscal responsibility and a breach of trust with Arizona's children and educators. These commonsense measures will help ensure egregious over-expenditures never happen again by creating a clear process for accountability and corrective action. We hope the Governor signs these bills.





Noah's Law Heads to the House

By Carine Werner

Arizona is facing a devastating reality, one that has taken far too many lives and continues to grow in rapid destruction. The heartbreaking death of Noah, a 17-year-old Desert Mountain High School student who tragically lost his life to a synthetic opioid overdose last year, highlights the significant threat opioids have on the lives of Arizonans. Despite the profound loss to Noah's family and community, the individual responsible for supplying the lethal drug has not been brought to justice, underscoring the need for stronger measures to deter the fentanyl trade. In an effort to hold drug dealers accountable, I am running 'Noah's Law' to clarify that the individuals who supply these fatal narcotics must be punished when they contribute to the death of a person. While establishing a new sentencing range won't make the pain of losing a loved one any easier to deal with, it will better reflect the seriousness of the crime. I'm committed to addressing the opioid crisis head-on as this bill moves to the House after passing the Senate this week.



Celebrating America's 250th Birthday

By Senator Vince Leach

As we approach America's 250th birthday, we are gearing up for a year of celebration in 2026. Valley teen Riley H. won the state contest for "best America 250 logo" without having any experience in graphic design! Winning the popular vote prompted Riley to apply at ASU for graphic design school, and she was accepted! I was honored to meet Riley and congratulate her for the big win. To kick off the historic milestone, I am excited to announce the advancement of my bill, SB 1603, to establish a special "America250" license plate and dedicated fund to support the monumental anniversary. The America 250 license plate will serve as a visible symbol of our nation's incredible journey, from the signing of the Declaration of Independence to the nation of opportunity that we are today. It is more than just a plate, it's a statement of patriotism, and a way for every American to show their pride and participate in this once-in-a-lifetime celebration. So, let's hit the road with pride, show our spirit, and make this year a birthday bash to remember!



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