



July 22, 2023

## FREE SPEECH SUPPRESSION?

I co-chaired an eye-opening committee hearing Tuesday to examine concerns raised over faculty members of Barrett, The Honors College at Arizona State University who may have coerced their students to not participate in an event where several nationally renowned conservative speakers were in attendance. Allegations were made of a faculty-driven condemnation campaign against the event, both nationally and inside ASU classrooms, as well as faculty viciously and publicly attacking the prime sponsor of the event, the T.W. Lewis Center for Personal Development. As a result, the donor of the center withdrew his funding, the center closed its doors, and the executive director who organized the event was let go from her position. ASU administrators have so far defended both the faculty and the Dean of Barrett in their alleged roles of censorship. I've requested ASU investigate this matter and turn in their findings to the Senate within the next 60 days for our review.



- Senator Anthony Kern

## WELCOME SENATOR SHAWNNA BOLICK!

The Senate Republican Leadership Team is excited to welcome Senator Shawna Bolick to our Caucus, replacing Senator Steve Kaiser who resigned back in June after honorably serving several years at the Legislature. We thank him for his tireless efforts in tackling the tough issues our state faces. Senator Bolick is no stranger to the Legislature, as I had the honor of working with her in the House of Representatives where she served from 2018 to 2022. During that time, she advocated to strengthen Arizona's education system, worked to build a better business climate for our state, protected free market principles and supported public safety. I was happy to participate in her swearing-in ceremony at the Senate this week. We are confident Senator Bolick will be able to hit the ground running in our efforts to keep Arizona a free state from the heavy hand of excessive government control.



- Senator T.J. Shope



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## OHV RECREATION IN ARIZONA

On Friday, I co-chaired the Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Study Committee with the purpose of collecting and studying information from the public and stakeholders regarding off-highway vehicle issues in this State. Each year, we submit a report regarding the Committee's activities and recommendations for administrative or legislative action. This matter is becoming increasingly important as there has been a large increase in OHV use since 2020. The Committee listened to testimony regarding the challenges and impacts off-road vehicles can present, as well as educating the public on how to safely enjoy these vehicles. I'm really appreciative of everyone who took their time to share their knowledge and experiences and look forward to subsequent study committee hearings in the coming months as we seek to resolve these issues.



- Senator Sine Kerr

## UNIVERSAL SCHOOL CHOICE SCHOLARSHIPS

Parents are getting their children ready to head back to the classroom, so I'd like to take this opportunity to remind families Senate Republicans protected the recently expanded universal school choice Empowerment Scholarship Accounts from Hobbs' and Democrats' threats to cut, cap, or eliminate the program. ESAs directly provide families with 90% of the state's per student spending allocated in the budget. Any student in grades K-12 can receive an ESA, and parents can apply for an ESA year round. ESAs can be used to pay for private school tuition, home education, tutors, curriculum, therapies, and more. As of mid-July, almost 60,000 students are benefiting from the program, many of which are of families fed up with their underperforming schools and seeking better opportunities for their children. I believe school choice is parental authority and the civil rights issue of our generation. To learn more, visit <https://www.azed.gov/esa>.



- Senator Janae Shamp



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## EDUCATION FUNDING IN FY 2024

As schools begin to welcome students back from summer break, I'd like to highlight some educational spending priorities that Senate Republicans advocated for. In total, the FY 2024 budget includes \$580 million for K-12 education above the standard adjustments for inflation and population increases. The largest single investment will provide a \$300 million infusion into districts and charters for the next school year. Distributed on a per pupil basis, this flexible funding can be used for operations or capital needs. The budget also provides \$200 million in school capital repair funding. These monies are distributed as grants to district schools and pay for roofs, air conditioning unit replacements, and other structural repairs. The budget also commits \$100 million to various Higher Education programs, including \$59 million for the State's public universities and \$41 million for community colleges, allocated primarily for rural community colleges outside of Maricopa and Pima counties. - Senator Ken Bennett



## SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

During this session, I was able to pass more than 30 bills out of the Senate, which I believe might even be a state record for a freshman Senator! Ten of those bills went to the Governor's desk and four were signed into law. Although, one of my biggest achievements would have to be spearheading the rejection of Theresa Cullen's appointment as ADHS director. My efforts sparked a larger conversation that ultimately led to the establishment of the Senate Committee on Director Nominations by Senate President, Warren Petersen. This committee has been crucial to vetting the governor's state director nominations, several of which would have been detrimental to the state. I'm so proud to be a part of a Republican caucus that is so connected and strong. We have truly locked arms for a greater purpose. - Senator Justine Wadsack





NAME	DISTRICT	PHONE	EMAIL
SENATOR KEN BENNETT	LD 1	(602) 926-5874	KBENNETT@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR SHAWNNA BOLICK	LD 2	(602) 926-3314	SBOLICK@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR JOHN KAVANAGH	LD 3	(602) 926-5170	JKAVANAGH@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR WENDY ROGERS	LD 7	(602) 926-3042	WROGERS@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR DAVID FARNSWORTH	LD 10	(602) 926-3387	DFARNSWORTH@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR J.D. MESNARD	LD 13	(602) 926-4481	JMESNARD@AZLEG.GOV
SENATE PRESIDENT WARREN PETERSEN	LD 14	(602) 926-4136	WPETERSEN@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR JAKE HOFFMAN	LD 15	(602) 926-3292	JAKE.HOFFMAN@AZLEG.GOV
PRESIDENT PRO-TEM T.J. SHOPE	LD 16	(602) 926-3012	TSHOPE@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR JUSTINE WADSACK	LD 17	(602) 926-3106	JWADSACK@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR DAVID GOWAN	LD 19	(602) 926-5154	DGOWAN@AZLEG.GOV
MAJORITY WHIP SINE KERR	LD 25	(602) 926-5955	SKERR@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR ANTHONY KERN	LD 27	(602) 926-3497	AKERN@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR FRANK CARROLL	LD 28	(602) 926-3249	FCARROLL@AZLEG.GOV
SENATOR JANA E SHAMP	LD 29	(602) 926-3499	JSHAMP@AZLEG.GOV
MAJORITY LEADER SONNY BORRELLI	LD 30	(602) 926-5051	SBORRELLI@AZLEG.GOV

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