

COCONINO DEMOCRATS

ARIZONA LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 28, 2021

It's a light week right now as the AZ Legislature shifts bills between houses. Next week will see a return to the flurry of activity. Be alert for a number of very bad bills to resurface as they make their way through their sister chamber. This might be a good week to focus on lobbying Senator Sinema to get her to support eliminating the Senate Filibuster and to support raising the minimum wage. She seems to need a LOT of reminding of who got her elected and what we all stand for.

Here is a segment of an alert from Save Our Schools:

2. Contact lawmakers:

Make calls! Even if you've already called, **call again**. The volume and persistence of our calls and emails matters!

→ **SB1452** (ESA voucher expansion): Call those members of the House Ways & Means Committee who have not already pledged to oppose this expansion. Tell them to respect AZ voters by voting "no" on SB1452, a massive ESA voucher expansion, and tell them why you support your local public school.

- ◆ Chair Shawonna Bolick - (602) 926-3244 / sbolick@azleg.gov
- ◆ Rep. Regina Cobb - (602) 926-3126 / rcobb@azleg.gov
- ◆ Rep. Tim Dunn - (602) 926-4139 / tdunn@azleg.gov
- ◆ Rep. Steve Kaiser - (602) 926-3314 / skaiser@azleg.gov
- ◆ Rep. Brenda Barton - (602) 926-3421 / bbarton@azleg.gov
- ◆ Rep. Travis Grantham - (602) 926-4868 / tgrantham@azleg.gov

→ Continue to call and email SB1452 sponsor Senator Paul Boyer (602-926-4173 / pboyer@azleg.gov) and tell him voters have rejected ESA voucher expansion that harms our schools.

USE RTS FOR THE BILLS LISTED BELOW

HEALTH CARE

SB 1096 – SUPPORT – Monday Committee – STRIKER – Would fund AHCCCS, Arizona’s Medicaid System. The money to fund the \$3 billion program exists but permission to spend those funds was inadvertently left out of last year’s “skinny budget”. The bill would also fund Kids Care, a program to provide low-cost health insurance to more than 32,000 children of the working poor.

EDUCATION

SB 1097 – SUPPORT – Tuesday Committee – Would clarify excused absences for mental health reasons for students.

HB 2241 – SUPPORT – Tuesday Committee – Would require students be taught about the Holocaust and other genocides at least twice between the 7th and 12th grades. All the more important given the current events!

SB 1376 – SUPPORT – Tuesday Committee – Would require health education in schools to include a mental health component. Mental health issues among youth have been on a steady, alarming rise in recent years.

HB 2705 – SUPPORT – Tuesday Committee – Is an emergency measure that prohibits a school from establishing a dress code policy that prevents students from wearing traditional tribal regalia or objects of cultural significance at a graduation ceremony.

GOVERNANCE

SB 1104 – OPPOSE – Wednesday Committee – Would require political campaigns to itemize every contribution from someone outside of Arizona, complete with occupation and employer. This would hit hardest at groups which have reshaped politics by collecting small-dollar contributions and distributing across the nation for state legislative races

GENERAL FUND

SB 1135 – OPPOSE – Wednesday Committee – Would increase the allowable dollar-for-dollar 529 tax deduction, currently a total of \$2,000 single/\$4,000 couple to \$2,000/\$4,000 per 529 beneficiary. The change would be retroactive to 2020. Huge impact on general fund tax revenue!

ENVIRONMENT

SB 1370 – SUPPORT – Would extends termination dates (or in one case re-establishes a program already terminated) for several important programs within the AZ Dept of Environmental Quality (DEQ). These programs include such programs as the Vehicle Emissions Inspection Program and the (Drinking Water) Monitoring and Assistance Program.

SB 1442 – SUPPORT – Would clarify and add to the list of mechanisms for collaboration and funding so that the State Forester can address hazardous fuels in our forests to increase forest health and reduce fire/flood hazards.

HB 2079 – OPPOSE – Deals with the eradication of invasive vegetation – Sierra Club **opposes** because there is no provision to protect ecosystem health, wildlife, or native species.

HB 2188 – SUPPORT – Provides more formal regulation of pest management and pesticide businesses.

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ALERT

Provided with the help of the Democrats of the Red Rocks

PENDING FEDERAL LEGISLATION

FEDERAL ACTION ALERT – FEBRUARY 28, 2021

For Senators Kelly and Sinema:

Thanks on Sponsored Bills, Filibuster Removal, Covid-19 relief bill: Please call and thank both Senators for Co-Sponsoring the Equality Act and the Grand Canyon Protection Act (Equality Act that would include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as protected characteristics in labor and civil rights laws) but let them know their efforts are almost meaningless without their support for the removal of the filibuster. Urge them to vote for the Covid-19 relief bill.

Sample voice mail or email: ***“My name is XXXX and I live in XXXXX, Arizona. I want to thank Sen. XXX for cosponsoring the Equality Act and the Grand Canyon Protection Act, both of which are so important. I urge you to support removing the filibuster so that we can have some hope of protecting the civil rights of gay and transgender people and to save our beautiful Grand Canyon. Finally, please vote for a full \$1.9 billion Covid-19 relief bill with an increase in the minimum wage.”***

Sen. Mark Kelley: Call (202) 224-2235 (DC), Email via his website at <http://www.kelly.senate.gov> Tag the Senator at @senmarkkelly

Sen. Sinema: Call (202) 224-4521 (DC) or (602) 598-7327. Email via her website at [“http://www.sinema.senate.gov”](http://www.sinema.senate.gov) Tag the Senator at @senatorsinema,

For Representative O'Halleran:

Reclaim Power to Declare War for Congress: Urge Rep. O'Halleran to support HR255 "To Repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force" and HR266 "To Repeal the Authorization for use of Military Force Against Iraq."

Its time that Congress reassert its duty as the body that may declare war. This was abdicated on September 18, 2001 when Congress granted the President almost unbridled authority to use military force against "terrorism". It was further abdicated by the authorization in 2002 to use force against Iraq.

Here is a sample voice mail or email: ***"Dear Rep. O'Halleran, My name is XXXXX and I live in XXXXX. I'm calling (emailing) to urge your vote in favor of HR255 and HR266 which would restore to Congress the power to declare war. These bills would revoke the disastrous laws that outsourced Congressional responsibility and allowed Pres. G.W. Bush to invade Iraq and engage in almost unlimited military actions under the guise of fighting terrorism. Congress must be involved in these very important decisions."***

Coconino County BOS Update 2-27-21

This past week the BOS held two executive sessions only (closed to public). The sole purpose was to decide what to do about filling the County Manager position. In reading the local paper this morning, I saw that Steve Peru, a very able and long-time resident and past Cty Manager is being seriously considered for the position...it seems like a slam dunk....

In Covid news, there has been a decrease in hospitalizations and new cases, an increase in vaccine appmts thru the County and its partners....looks good!!!!

INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

The Independent Redistricting Commission has a new website. It is not fully built out, but meeting notices and agendas are available. The link is irc.az.gov.

The next meeting is Tuesday, March 3rd at 9:00 a.m. Here's a link to watch it: <https://youtu.be/DKd5Uy2gvIM>

The link for public comments will be activated a bit after 9:00 and remain open until just before the meeting adjourns. That link is <https://forms.gle/Shrm6GgifPRECPoN6>.

On the agenda is an initial discussion about the impact of the delay of census data until the end of September. Please consider making public comments during the meeting. Here are suggestions, some from Deborah Howard:

- The delay in census data provides time for the Commission, and the public, to become experts about Arizona and about redistricting in Arizona. To that end, please bring in expert speakers on the criteria required by Prop 106, and provide several avenues for public input.
- The delay in census data provides time to have formal presentations from advocacy organizations serving voters protected by the Voting Rights Act.
- I encourage the Commission to host formal presentations from legal experts to discuss the toughest decisions involving redistricting in Arizona.