

# END OF SESSION SUMMARY

ARIZONA SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

2023

56th Legislature:  
1st Regular Session





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# LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY & BUDGET



# SUMMARY OF ARIZONA'S 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The first regular session of the 56th Legislature has not adjourned “sine die” at this point. We expect that to happen when the legislature returns on July 31. Although we don’t expect any further legislation at that time, things can obviously change. Normally we would wait for the finish, but given the unique schedule this year, we decided not to wait on this report.

A total of 1,671 bills and 109 memorials and resolutions were introduced. At this time, 346 of those bills gained the approval of both chambers and made it to the Governor’s desk. Of those 346 bills, Governor Katie Hobbs signed 202 into law and vetoed 143, a 41% veto rate and more than double the record for the most bills vetoed in a session of 58, which was formerly held by Governor Janet Napolitano. One bill has not been acted on at this time. [SB 1131 residential lease; municipal tax exemption](#) is still in the possession of the

Senate and has not been sent to the Governor. Speculation is that the bill may be used as part of a possible deal on the Maricopa County transportation sales tax extension. Read more about both issues in the Notable Legislation and Issues section below.

Having a split government was something most of these members had never experienced before. In addition, more than a third of the Legislature were brand new legislators, not knowing the process at all. Those two factors and the general political ideological differences of the two caucuses made the goal of the 100-day session unlikely from the start. The Republicans wanted to send up several bills dealing elections, transgender issues, critical race theory, and other political statement issues which contributed to the record-breaking veto number.

# LEGISLATIVE BUDGET

The legislative budget process started off with the Republican caucus approving a “skinny” budget in mid-February which was limited to continuing the ongoing spending from the state’s FY23 budget. This budget, which passed by party lines, did not include spending of the additional \$2+ billion surplus that was available. As expected, Governor Hobbs vetoed that budget stating, “Arizonans deserve a budget that takes the real issues they are facing seriously. This do-nothing budget kicks the can down the road and it’s an insult to Arizonans who need their leaders to address affordable housing, invest in public education, and put money back into their pockets.” She then called on leadership to work with her on a bipartisan budget that makes key investments and helps address the problems citizens are facing.

After the veto of the continuation budget, leadership began meeting to determine how they could potentially come to a bipartisan budget with this new split government environment. This led to an approach that during our tenure we had never seen used before. Republican leadership divided up the \$2+ billion surplus, taking half for themselves and giving the other half to Governor Hobbs and the Democratic caucus to determine spending priorities. Republican leadership then divvied up the funds by giving each member a pot of cash to determine how they would like to spend it, with the warning that it could not be used for divisive and controversial items that would be complete dealbreakers for the other side of the aisle. Many were skeptical that this approach would work, however in the end it was successful in keeping members on the budget so that their key items would be funded.

The Legislature passed a \$17.8 billion budget package in early May. While most of the negotiations were between Governor Hobbs and Republican leadership initially, eventually a portion of the Democratic caucus was supportive of the overall package due to some key investments in education, healthcare, and housing. However, Democratic leadership criticized Governor Hobbs for her lack of involvement of the Democratic caucus earlier in the process, the lack of transparency, and the overall package falling short of funding some key priorities, including funding for developmental disability providers and universities. Additionally, they were disappointed that the budget did not include an override of the community college aggregate expenditure limit or put a cap or accountability measures on the growing ESA program. Ultimately, about half of the Democratic caucus supported the package.

# BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

## EDUCATION

**\$300**  
Million

in one-time  
K-12 State Aid  
Supplement

**\$15**  
Million

for Dual  
Enrollment  
Student  
Incentives

**\$88.6**  
Million

new, ongoing K-12  
funding, including  
\$20 million in  
District Additional  
Assistance

**FY24**

Aggregate  
Expenditure Limit  
Override for K-12

**\$341.9**  
Million

for School  
Facilities

New ESA  
reporting Metrics

Newly formed House Ad  
Hoc Committee on ESA  
Governance

## HOUSING

**\$150**  
Million  
to the Housing  
Trust Fund

**\$40**  
MILLION

to the newly created  
Homeless Shelter and  
Services Fund, plus  
an additional **\$20**  
**million** supplemental  
appropriation for FY23

## HEALTHCARE

KidsCare Expansion from **200% to 225%** of the federal poverty level

**\$15**  
Million

to nurse education investment pilot program

**\$1**  
Million

for Collaborative Care Uptake Fund to help primary care physicians in small practices to meet the initial costs of establishing and delivering behavioral health integration services through collaborative care model

## TRIBAL

**\$126.1**  
Million  
in Tribal  
Investments

**\$1 million** for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Task Force

## INFRASTRUCTURE

**\$23.6**  
Million

to the Rural Broadband Accelerated Match Fund

Approximately **\$600 million** in different transportation infrastructure projects around the state, including:

**\$89 million** for I-10 expansion

**\$76.2 million** for I-17 expansion

**\$54.3 million** for ADOT pavement rehabilitation projects

**\$7**  
Million

for Water Infrastructure Grant Funding

**\$5**  
Million

to ADOA for electric vehicle charging and advance fuel infrastructure

**Tax rebate** - \$260 million one-time rebate for taxpayers who had a tax liability for taxable year 2021 and claimed a dependent; \$250 per dependent under 17, \$100 per dependent over 17, with a cap of three dependents

**\$10** Million for Antihuman Trafficking Grant Fund

# NOTABLE LEGISLATION & ISSUES

## ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES!

If there was a theme song for the 2023 legislation session it would certainly be [Roll with the Punches](#) by Van Morrison. You know you want to turn it on and rock out...go ahead we will wait!

## NEW YEAR, NEW RULES

### APPROPRIATIONS - ISN'T ALL FUN AND GAMES, ANYMORE.

For the first time in a long time the Appropriations Committees stayed true to their name by only hearing bills that were appropriation specific. This limited the number of strikers (a bill that deals with one subject and is stricken to become a completely different topic) run the last week of appropriations. It also limited the shenanigans, much to some lobbyist's chagrin.

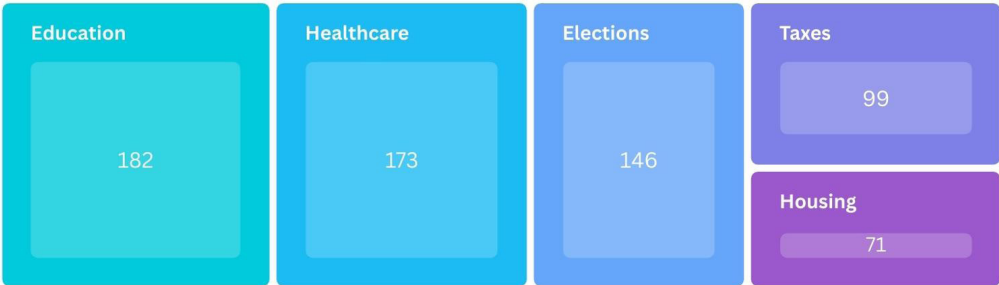
### THE RULE OF THE MAJORITY

The most annoying rule change for lawmakers and lobbyists alike was the "majority of the majority" rule. Yup it is exactly how it sounds... any bill that went to the House or Senate floor had to have a majority of the Republican caucus in support or it would not move forward in the opposite chamber. This caused some issues along the way. Some members had to reconsider a bill that had enough votes to pass but didn't get a majority of the majority. Democratic members were asked to get a vote county sheet of 16 Republicans before Republican leadership would even put the bill on the board for a vote. This caused Democrats to boycott and vote no on every bill that went on the board, leaving dozens of bills passing with only Republican support.

## ISSUES BY THE NUMBERS

Each year legislators introduce bills that seek to address many different issues. Like anything in life, not all things are equal and legislative subject matter is no different. Bills introduced in the 2023 legislative session addressed issues such as education, elections, firearms, water, and many others. Here is a list of the top five issues at the legislature based on bill volume:

Number of bills, resolutions, and memorials by issue



## CONTINUATION OF THE AGGREGATE EXPENDITURE LIMIT FOR K-12

The aggregate expenditure limit, or AEL, was put in place nearly 40 years ago as part of a broader effort to control spending by school districts in Arizona. The cap restricted the amount of money that schools could spend on operational and capital expenses, including salaries, facilities, and technology upgrades. Over the past four decades, the nature of education has transformed significantly, with the inclusion of specialized programs such as special education and vocational technical training and the introduction of school choice.

For the first time in recent history schools found themselves up against the cap in 2022. During the 2022 legislative session a “grand bargain” was made between lawmakers and Governor Ducey to infuse \$1 billion into the public education system while simultaneously expanding school choice. Part of that negotiated deal was the commitment from Governor Ducey to call a special session to lift the constitutional AEL allowing public district schools to spend the dollar appropriated in the FY 23 budget. Unfortunately, Governor Ducey did not uphold this promise, which propelled the issue to the forefront of the 2023 legislative session. With the sponsorship and leadership of Representative David Cook the legislature passed the override before the March deadline avoiding a \$1.4 billion cut to public district schools. During the FY 24 budget negotiations an agreement was made between Governor Katie Hobbs, House Speaker Ben Toma, and Senate President Warren Petersen to override the AEL and allow schools the certainty that the dollars appropriated for FY 2024 could be used and avoiding another emergency during the 2024 legislative session.

While the override has provided temporary respite for school districts, there is a growing movement advocating for a permanent elimination of the aggregate expenditure limit or an updated limit that reflects the current educational landscape crucial to ensuring the equitable distribution of resources. Ultimately, Arizonans will need to decide as if a change to the state constitution is needed. It is expected the school leaders and legislature will work toward referring a solution to the ballot.

## ARIZONA’S HOUSING CRISIS

While Arizona has been experiencing rapid growth, both with the attraction of companies and Californians and others flocking to our state, it has left the state in a bit of a housing crisis. Arizona ranks 47th in availability of affordable housing and since the pandemic, Arizona’s increase in housing prices has been eclipsing most other states.

Over the last interim, a study committee co-chaired by Senator Steve Kaiser and former Representative Cesar Chavez brought together all the different stakeholders to try to develop policy ideas on how to address the growing housing concerns. The committee even did a traveling road show to different parts of the state to hear from local elected officials and residents. As a result, Senator Kaiser spent much of this legislative session trying to pass legislation to get more housing options available more quickly for Arizonans.

As a result of the hearings, Senator Kaiser determined one of the more significant impediments to housing is the lengthy zoning process and local regulations that municipalities put in place. Therefore, he introduced [SB 1117 housing; infrastructure; regulation; administration](#), which established residential zoning district regulations, limitations of residential housing design standards and required a municipal housing need assessment to be done by municipalities. The bill would have pre-empted cities and towns zoning

requirements and establish by-right zoning. Ultimately, this bill did not have the votes to pass because cities and towns were opposed, and because very vocal local grassroots organizations didn't want affordable housing developments in their areas. Senator Kaiser collaborated closely with Senator Anna Hernandez, Speaker Ben Toma, and Representative Analise Ortiz to try to find a path for a solution. He ultimately broke the issues contained in SB1117 into three other bills using strike-everything amendments on SB1161, SB1163, and HB2536. He spent countless hours negotiating with all the different parties and even ended up with an agreement with the League of Cities and Towns on SB1161 and SB1163. However, none of these bills made it through the process, leaving the housing issues lingering to be dealt with in future legislative sessions.

## FOOD AND RENTAL TAX

Going into the legislative session, GOP lawmakers were bound and determined to prohibit local governments from taxing unprepared food and residential rentals. Several bills were introduced to do just that. The idea as stated was to provide some relief to those more hurt by inflation. Not all local government tax food or rents. But those which do were concerned about how the lost revenue would impact their budgets.

[SB 1063 food; municipal tax; exemption](#); made its way through the legislature on a strictly partisan vote. It was met with a veto on March 28. In her veto letter that Governor stated that she has heard from local governments about the impact the bill would have on public safety and possible property tax increases. The bill was expected to reduce municipal transaction privilege taxes by up to \$182.9 million in FY24, \$189.3 million in FY25, and \$195.6 million in FY26. Republicans repeatedly sited that the increased revenues from the Wayfair fix would cover the decrease and dismissed the concerns.

[SB 1184 municipal tax exemption; residential leases](#); also made its way to the Governor. And was also met with a veto. This bill to passed by party lines except for Rep. Consuelo Hernandez (D – Tucson) who voted to support the bill. With this bill, the legislature attempted to fight off the budget complaints from local governments by appropriating about \$270 million to temporarily backfill their loss. This time the Governor stated that the bill does nothing to guarantee that the tax cut would actually be passed on to the renter.

[SB 1131 residential leases; municipal tax exemption](#); was the last legislative effort at banning rental taxes. In an attempt to address what the Governor said about SB 1184 and avoid another veto, the legislature took out the \$270 million, tried to tighten up the landlord language, and delayed the effective date until 2025. Although a couple of Democrats voted for the bill, it was mostly along party lines. Although the bill has passed both the House and Senate, it has not been transmitted to the Governor at this time. There is some thought that the Governor may tie this bill together with a Maricopa County Transportation tax extension. And so, at this point, she is not on the clock.

In the nothing is ever really dead in the legislature category; the rental tax issue reared its head again after the bill was vetoed. Rumor had it that the Governor was willing to sign a version of that bill provided she got an acceptable Maricopa County transportation plan extension. Which didn't happen (see below).

## MARICOPA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION TAX

For decades Maricopa County has had a sales tax dedicated to roads and transit projects. The current tax is set to expire in 2025. Because of an odd law, Maricopa County is the only county that requires permission from the legislature to issue a sales tax vote. Last year a deal was reached and sent to Governor Ducey. His veto of that bill came at the surprise and shock of the proponents. And so, the 2023 legislative session began. Lead by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) the proponents worked with legislators on various plans. As we approached the June 12 reconvening it appeared that the proponents and Republicans were moving closer to an agreement. Alas, things fell apart. The result was that the legislative Republicans moved forward with the plan as they desired. To be fair, some of the components of the plan were consistent with what MAG and others wanted. But many other provisions were not. At the end of the day (in fact likely the last bill passed this year) SB 1246 election; transportation tax; Maricopa County made it to the Governor's desk in a strictly partisan vote. As expected, the bill received a veto.

Where this leaves the long-standing Maricopa transportation tax is anyone's guess. A couple of options have been discussed. One would be to run a statewide initiative to place the matter on the ballot. It would be odd for the entire state to vote on a tax that would only exist within Maricopa County. But it is possible yet expensive. Another option would be for the various cities in Maricopa County to pass their own transportation sales tax. How this would mechanically work is a question. And of course, the last possibility would be for MAG and others to continue negotiations with legislative leaders with an eye at passing a new bill when the legislature returns on July 31 or through a possible special session.

## EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

For the first time in Arizona history, the Senate President created a standing committee to evaluate all executive nominations to lead a state agency affectionately referred to as "DINO" (Committee on Director Nominations). Prior to this change, executive nominees were considered by the Senate's regular standing committees. For instance, a person appointed to the Department of Corrections would go before the Senate Judiciary Committee. The DINO committee certainly didn't hold any punches either, as executive nominees for agency leaders ran through Senator Jake Hoffman's gauntlet leaving some nominees being eliminated.

- The Arizona Department of Health Services, Dr. Theresa Cullen was the first up and the first eliminated. After being voted down by the committee along party-lines Dr. Cullen decided to withdraw her name and Governor Hobbs removed her nomination from consideration.
- Matt Stewart was Gov. Hobbs' selection to run the Department of Child Safety, but he didn't even get an opportunity to go to the rose ceremony before the Governor withdrew his nomination. Rumor for the withdrawal was issues found by the DINO committee.
- The nominee for the Department of Administration is still in limbo as the committee held Elizabeth Alvarado-Thorson nomination for what they claim was her "dodging hypothetical questions."

The Governor sent 21 agency director names to the Senate. The following are agency directors who have been confirmed:

- Jennifer Toth - Director of Arizona Department of Transportation.
- Tom Torres - Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Management
- Ben Henry - Department of Liquor Licenses and Control
- Ryan Thornell - Director of the Arizona Department of Corrections
- Susan Nicolson - Department of Real Estate

Two directors passed the Senate DINO Committee and are awaiting action by the full Senate:

- Jeff Glover - Department of Public Safety
- Angela Rodgers - Department of Economic Security

The nomination of Theresa Cullen to lead the Department of Health Services was rejected by the Senate. The DINO committee recommended that the full Senate reject the nomination of Martin Quezada to lead the Registrar of Contractors, an action which was rendered moot as the Governor withdrew his nomination.

12 agency directors were nominated by the Governor, but had no action taken by the Senate, including:

- Karen Peters - Department of Environmental Quality
- Carmen Heredia - Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
- Jaclyn Johnson – Department of Gaming
- David Lujan – Department of Child Safety
- Robin Sahid – State Land Department
- Joan Serviss – Housing Department
- Lisa Urias – Office of Tourism

These are Directors that Governor’s Hobbs retained from the Ducey administration who did not need additional confirmation:

- Department of Water Resources Director Tom Buschatzke
- Department of Revenue Rob Woods
- State Parks and Trails – Bob Broscheid
- Department of Emergency and Military Affairs – Major General Kerry Muehlenbeck
- Game & Fish Department – Ty Gray
- Department of Juvenile Corrections – Doug Sargent

## FIRST THEY COME AND THEN THEY GO

The year started with 36 of the 90 state legislators seeing their first term as a legislator. An additional five have served in the past but are returning. That's 41 of 90 members who are new. But alas, we guess that wasn't enough turnover.

During the session, three members resigned, and one was expelled.

- Senator Raquel Teran resigned her seat this year to focus on her campaign for the Congressional District 3 seat being vacated by Congressman Ruben Gallego due to his run for Senator Kyrsten Sinema's U.S. Senate seat. As a result of her resignation, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors appointed state Representative Flavio Bravo to fill out her term.
- The vacancy created by Rep. Bravo's appointment resulted in the process being repeated for his replacement. Rep. Bravo's seat was then filled by Quanta Crews.
- And as you know, Julie Willoughby was appointed to complete the term of ousted Representative Liz Harris. Harris is now planning to run against Senator J.D. Mesnard.
- Representative and House Minority Leader Andres Cano will be stepping down to pursue a graduate degree at Harvard Kennedy School. His replacement is still pending.
- After business concluded on the bills, Senator Steve Kaiser announced that he will be resigning to pursue other opportunities. His replacement is still pending.

By our count that will add four more to the 41 new members. Representative Bravo was already in the initial count, so his transfer over doesn't count towards another new member.

# WHAT LIES AHEAD

At the end of a legislative session there are often issues left unaddressed. As a result, we occasionally hear of the possibility of a special session later in the year to deal with those issues. Last year for example there was talk of a special session or special sessions for election reforms, the Maricopa County transportation tax, dealing with the K-12 aggregate expenditure limit, and others.

This year we are hearing no such chatter, other than a possible special session to address the Maricopa County transportation tax, as mentioned above.

In the meantime, things are already taking shape for the 2024 general election, both in terms of candidates and ballot issues. Below is what we know and what we are hearing.

## BALLOT MEASURES

The 2024 ballot will see various issues upon which the people will vote. These issues will come either from referrals to the ballot by the legislature or by citizen initiative and they may either seek to make changes to the state constitution or state statute. Only the people can vote to change the constitution. But keep in mind that in Arizona, any changes made to statute by a vote of the people may only be changed by the legislature with a three-fourths vote and even then, only if the change furthers the intent of the original act.

## LEGISLATIVE REFERRALS FOR 2024

Traditionally the legislature doesn't send much, if anything to the ballot during the first year of the two-year legislative term. This year they sent the following to the 2024 ballot for a vote:

[HCR 2033 primary elections; eligible candidates](#) – This proposed constitutional change would prohibit any local election law that is contrary to the direct primary election law as outlined in the Arizona Constitution. As direct primary elections are already enshrined in the Arizona Constitution, this measure is an effort to prohibit local governments from using any type of ranked choice voting method for their elections. The proposal is a preemptive move by the legislature to block the upcoming plans of voter advocacy organizations. Voter Choice Arizona and Save Democracy Arizona are spearheading a 2024 ballot initiative that would put to voters the question of whether to implement open primaries and the ranked choice method. HCR 2033 passed the legislature by a party line vote.

[HCR 2039 governor; emergency powers](#) – This proposed constitutional amendment would terminate powers given to the Governor during a state of emergency 30 days after the emergency proclamation, unless extended by the legislature. It would exempt from that the emergency powers granted to the Governor arising from a state of war emergency or an emergency arising from a flood or fire. Further it would require the Governor to call the legislature into a special session if presented with a petition signed by at least one-

third of the legislators. The special session would be limited to addressing the emergency powers.

[SCR 1006 death benefit; assault; first responders](#) – This proposed statutory change was promoted by various police unions. It would require that the State pay \$250,000 to the surviving spouse or children of a first responder killed in the line of duty. It funds those payments through the creation of a new penalty fee on every fine for any criminal offense. Further it broadens the crime of aggravated assault on a peace officer to include all first responders.

[SCR 1015 initiative; referendum; signatures; legislative districts](#) – This proposed constitutional change would require that to qualify for the ballot, and voter initiative receive signatures from all 30 legislative districts around the state. It would require that ten percent of the qualified electors from each legislative district sign the campaign petition for statutory changes, and fifteen percent for constitutional changes.

## CITIZEN INITIATIVES

In Arizona citizens may also place issues on the ballot for a vote of the people. To do so, a group must submit to the Secretary of State by July 3, 2024, 383,923 valid signatures for a constitutional change and 255,949 valid signatures for a statutory change. At this time, we see only one effort pending that may make the ballot.<sup>1</sup>

[I-2-2024 Raise the Wage AZ](#) – This proposed statutory change would do the following:

- repeal the prohibition on local jurisdictions to establish a minimum wage higher than the federal minimum wage,
- increase the minimum wage by \$1.00 per hour over the cost-of-living adjustment on January 1, 2025, and again on January 1, 2026,
- leave the cost-of-living adjustment in place thereafter, and
- phase out the \$3.00 per hour minimum wage reduction for tipped employees by January 1, 2027.

## CANDIDATE ELECTIONS

2024 will see congressional, Corporation Commission, and legislative elections but no elections of statewide officials. Of most significance Arizona will hold an election for U.S. Senate. Incumbent and Democrat-turned independent Sen. Kyrsten Sinema is up for re-election. Although she has not announced her intentions, should she run, Arizona will again be in the national spotlight.

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<sup>1</sup> The Voter Choice Arizona and Safe Democracy Arizona efforts mentioned about have yet to submit the paperwork to the Secretary of State required to begin gathering signatures.

Although the field for any of the upcoming elections are far from set, here is what we are seeing or hearing at present:

## U.S. SENATE

- Kyrsten Sinema (I) – rumored
- Ruben Gallaego (D) – current congressman
- Mark Lamb (R) – current Pinal County Sheriff
- Kari Lake (R) – rumored

## CONGRESS

### CD 1

- David Schweikert (R) – incumbent
- Amish Shah (D) – current state legislator
- Andrei Cherny (D) -

### CD 2

- Eli Crane (R) – incumbent

### CD 3

- Raquel Teran (D) – former legislator
- Yassamin Ansari (D) – current Phoenix City Councilmember

### CD 4

- Greg Stanton (D) – incumbent
- Dave Giles (R) – engineer and consultant
- Kelly Cooper (R) – restaurant owner

### CD 5

- Andy Biggs (R) – incumbent

### CD 6

- Juan Ciscomani (R) – incumbent
- Kirsten Engel (D) – former legislator

### CD 7

- Raul Grijalva (D) – incumbent

### CD 8

- Debbie Lesko (R) – incumbent

### CD 9

- Paul Gosar (R) – incumbent

## CORPORATION COMMISSION

The Arizona Corporation Commission consists of five commissioners elected statewide. Of those five three have seats up in 2024. One of those three is Jim O'Connor (R) who will be at his term limit and therefore not eligible to run in 2024. The other two, Lea Marquez Peterson (R) and Anna Tovar (D) are eligible to run for re-election although neither has filed a Statement of Interest at this time. The most notable name to throw his hat in the ring currently is former Commissioner Doug Little (R).

# ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

## IT SEEMS THAT SOMETIMES WE CAN ALL GET ALONG

Did you know that as a group the legislature seems to really like softball. For many years the Senate Eagles play the House Ducks. In a rare show of camaraderie and bipartisanship this annual game offers a chance for legislators and staff of both parties to come together over America's pastime. This year the Eagles took home the trophy (and yes there is an actual trophy) by thumping the Ducks 17 – 3.

As none of these folks are conditioned athletes it is not unusual for injuries to occur. In fact, in the 2014 game now governor, then legislator Katie Hobbs suffered one such injury. Gov. Hobbs hit an infield single and successfully made it to first base. Unfortunately, she hit the base wrong and ended up breaking her leg. As our theme here is bipartisanship, then Senator and physician Kelli Ward cared for her after the injury. You will remember Kelli Ward as the recent head of the Arizona Republican party and one who led the charge over alleged fraud in the Hobbs gubernatorial victory last year. And as this game is not about politics, even then Senate President, now Congressman Andy Biggs had this to say about Hobbs, "As much as it must have hurt, she braved it very well."

See, they can get along when they want to.

## WHAT SAY YOU?

We at P3 often testify on your behalf at legislative committee hearings. And sometimes that work yields lighter side moments. So, if you hear our P3 faithful leader asking "what say you" know that is a phrase she picked up while testifying this year as Senator Wendy Rogers peppered her with questions, ending in the quote. We've added it to our repertoire ... what say you?

## HIDE AND SEEK

We are not sure if this qualifies as a lighter side moment, but it certainly is one of the more bizarre things we have seen at the legislature. In an odd piece of capitol news, security camera footage was released to the media in April showing Representative Stephanie Stahl Hamilton removing bibles from the members lounge in the House of Representatives and relocating them to various odd places throughout the House such as in a refrigerator or under a couch cushion. According to media reports, Representative Stahl Hamilton was moving the bibles to protest the separation of church and state. After the media reports came out, Representative Stahl Hamilton publicly apologized for her actions from the House floor. We are not sure what to make of this, but click [here](#) to view local news coverage.

As a result of her actions, Rep. Stahl Hamilton was hit with an ethics complaint. That complaint resulted in an effort late in session to expel her. That vote requires two-thirds to support. That did not happen. Instead, the House voted to censure her, a vote that requires a simple majority.

## WE ARE NOT IMMUNE OR PERFECT

For this last item, we will just make fun of ourselves ...

Is it expulsion



or explosion?



# YOUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Given the uncertainty of the new, ultra-conservative legislature we encouraged most clients to lay low. Fortunately for the ASLA little attention was paid to regulatory boards and professions. Instead, elections, housing, drag shows, etc. took the forefront. This may change next year, at least in part, as the Board of Technical Registration is up for its sunset review.

But you can always count on the legislature to introduce relevant pieces of legislation. Such was true again this year. Below a couple items of interest to the ASLA.

## [HB 2536 administrative review; approvals; developments. \(Rep. Toma\)](#)

**SUMMARY:** The bill would have allowed a city, town, or county to:

- Authorize administrative personnel to review and approve site, plans, development plans, final plats, design review plans, etc. without a public hearing,
- Adopt a self-certification program,
- Allow at-risk submittals for certain preliminary grading and drainage work, and
- Allow for certain expedited permit reviews.

**ACTION:** This bill passed House easily by a vote of 60 – 0. But it was ultimately the victim of a strike-everything amendment which turned it into a bill dealing with housing and zoning regulation.

**P3 NOTE:** The design of the bill was to provide an option for more efficient review and approval of the items listed. P3 monitored the progress on this bill.

## [SB 1103 administrative review; approvals; developments \(Sen. Petersen\)](#)

**SUMMARY:** This bill is identical to HB 2536 described above.

**ACTION:** This bill made it through the process with few no votes. It was signed by the Governor on March 3 and will take effect on the general effective date – a date not yet known.

**P3 NOTE:** The design of the bill was to provide an option for more efficient review and approval of the items listed. P3 monitored the progress on this bill.