



Newsletter
April
2021

NIL CARBORUNDUM ILLEGITIMI

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Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. There is no reason which can excuse the denial of that right. There is no duty which weighs more heavily on us than the duty we have to ensure that right. It is wrong—deadly wrong—to deny any of your fellow Americans the right to vote in this country. There is no issue of state’s rights or national rights. There is only the struggle for human rights.
Lyndon B. Johnson

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BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE



APRIL ZOOM MEETING - Guest Speakers Lisa Graves & Gabriella Cazares-Kelly



Lisa Graves, Activist and Author

Lisa Graves received her J.D. degree from Cornell Law School. She previously served as the Chief Counsel for Nominations on the United States Senate Judiciary Committee under Senator Leahy (D-Vermont) and as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the US Department of Justice during the Clinton Administration. Graves also worked as the Senior Legislative Strategist on national security issues for the American Civil Liberties Union, and as an adjunct law professor at the George Washington University Law School.

Graves is a progressive activist who is a senior fellow and the former executive director of the Center for Media and Democracy, having served from 2009 to 2017. Subsequently, she became president of True North Research and co-director of DocumentedInvestigations.org. Graves has investigated and reported on the Koch Brothers, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and the State Policy Network. In 2020, she published a report entitled "The Billionaire Behind Efforts to Kill the U.S. Postal Service," which alleged that Charles Koch had been trying to privatize the U.S. Postal Service since the 1970s.

Graves has received awards from the Milwaukee Press Club, the Sidney Award, the Park Center for Independent Media.



Gabriella Cazares-Kelly, Pima County Recorder

Gabriella co-founded Indivisible Tohono, a grassroots community organization that is focused on providing opportunities for education and civic engagement for members of the Tohono O’odham Nation. She is extremely active in local politics, serving as the President of the Progressive Democrats of Southern Arizona and the Vice-President of the Arizona Democratic Party’s Native American Caucus. She is committed to creating and transforming spaces to include Indigenous voices and the voices of those who are historically underrepresented in our county.

BAD BILLS AND THE PEOPLE WHO SPONSOR THEM

by Dee Maitland

Overview:

Tracking the 1789 bills that were proposed this legislative session has been a Herculean task. Appreciation needs to be shown to the League of Women Voters and Civic Engagement Beyond Voting for their hard work, dedication, and expertise. I started using their weekly alerts to follow what our three LD11 legislators were doing, only to find the Koch donor network has its tentacles into our legislative body way beyond these three.

Voter Suppression:

Including Finchem, Leach and Roberts Arizona has 26 legislators who have been active in the Koch funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC). This group proposed 60 voter suppression bills making voting, recalls and initiatives difficult, crippling efforts of county recorders, and giving legislators the ability to override election results. The Brennan Center for Justice is tracking state voting bills across the nation. Here in Arizona, they are watching 23 bills that would restrict voting access and 16 bills that would expand access. The score card so far: 19 of the 23 restricting bills were sponsored by one or more of our ALEC legislators, and none of the 16 expansion bills got a hearing.

Governance:

The ALEC group introduced 25 bills on governing, most of which grab power for legislators from the federal government, and our Arizona Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, the voter-approved Independent Redistricting Commission, and the Arizona Corporate Commission. One of the bills makes it almost impossible for citizens to sit on oversight boards.

Education:

They proposed 23 education bills that greatly expand the reach and program coverage of vouchers, micro-manage curricula, and ban any perceived political activity by teachers. Many of their 13 proposed tax cuts are aimed at defunding Prop 208. They also proposed 4 NRA bills, the worst of which allows guns on public school property.

Anti-Abortion:

They sponsored 4 anti-abortion bills, one codifying personhood rights at conception.

Religious Organizations and Individuals:

One of the most dangerous of the bills (HB2648) is supported by 19 of the ALEC legislators, including Finchem and Roberts. It would designate religious organizations as “essential services” during a state of emergency. It would also give religious organizations total protection from any action taken by state government to...impose, levy or assess a monetary fine, fee, civil or criminal penalty, damages award or injunction against a religious organization.” Further, the definition of religious organization would include any individual or entity “whether it is integrated or affiliated with a church or other house of worship.”

RECALLING FINCHEM

by Dee Maitland

If you have not signed the petition to recall LD11 Representative Mark Finchem, here is a brief history of his nefarious actions throughout his five years in office. He has been on the wrong side of every headline event and policy issue. He represents a threat to all of us.

He championed armed insurrections

- ✓ **He had a role in the Mulheur Wildlife Refuge Insurrection.** Finchem was the Coordinator for the Coalition of Western States whose supporters showed up at the refuge, sabotaging local and FBI law enforcement efforts to end the standoff. The Bundy Family assault resulted in one death and extensive damage to federal property.
- ✓ **He called Charlottesville a “Deep State PSYOP.”** He falsely claimed that the white supremacist Unite the Right rally was led not by neo-Nazis and other members of the alt-right, but by “two Democrat mobs fighting for control and narrative foundation.”
- ✓ **He took part in the January 6th Insurrection.** An Oath Keeper, Finchem assisted in the planning for the Insurrection that resulted in five deaths and over 140 officers wounded. He attended the event and tweeted encouragement to the mob.

He subverted Democracy

- ✓ **He spread falsehoods about legitimacy of November election.**
- ✓ **He chaired a Stop the Steal Event in Phoenix.** Speakers included Trump’s attorneys Rudy Giuliani and Jenna Ellis. 11 of our Republican legislators attended.
- ✓ **He was a paid Trump Operative.** Finchem received \$6,000 for “security” for the Stop the Steal event.
- ✓ **He spread the “Big Lie” on Steve Bannon’s show “The War Room.”** He claimed the election was fraudulent and encouraged the recall of Maricopa Board of Supervisors.
- ✓ **He called for the impeachment** of the Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General for having verified the election.

He is anti-public education

- ✓ **He fought with University Board of Regents.** Although the legislature had drastically cut funding to education, he demanded Regents keep tuition low and accused them of mismanagement.
- ✓ **He whined about a University of Arizona job posting.** He accused the University of being “snowflakes” with a “socialist group-think” for having posted a job listing for a Social Justice expert.
- ✓ **He dismissed the Arizona State University study on teacher pay.** He said he does not believe teachers are underpaid.
- ✓ **He proposed a bill to cripple teachers.** HCR2030 would prohibit teachers and teaching assistants from any actions viewed as “political” by legislators, including discussing bills, court cases or current political issues. The bill also included a draconian Code of Ethics for teachers.

He has sabotaged other elected officials

- ✓ **He hired his brother to refute the Governor’s Covid actions.** He hired Anchor-Helm, where his brother is sole director, to prove that there is no correlation between Covid infections and hospitalization.
- ✓ **He sponsored a bill to defy Obama.** One of his first sponsored bills would block state resources from being used to implement any Presidential Executive Order.
- ✓ **He sponsored a resolution supporting California Seceding from the Union.**
- ✓ **He sponsored a bill to strip the County Board’s authority.** This would force Pima County and the City of Tucson to accept Operation Stonegarden funds.
- ✓ **He signed on to fascist bills allowing legislators to defy federal 2nd Amendment laws; override Presidential Executive Orders; curtail the Governor’s emergency powers; limit the number of Justices on Supreme Court; oppose DC Statehood; defy court orders to pay court costs; restrict the freedom of assembly; and oppose federal authority to regulate elections should the voting rights bills in Congress pass.**
- ✓ **He signed on to bill HB2648 granting “religious organizations and individuals” immunity from State Laws.**

REMEMBER ALL OF HIS THREATS TO OUR DEMOCRACY

WE WANT TO SEE FINCHEM OUT OF OFFICE

Update: The Wheels of Justice

by Tom Meconi

Orange jail jumpsuits, millions in attorney fees, billions in civil exposure! Get your popcorn!

As difficult as it is to even think about the former resident of the White House, it is important to remember that our legal system still works. To that end, we are providing a synopsis of the major lawsuits and investigations, civil and criminal, pending. With many other peripheral actions and investigations breaking every day, the list is not exhaustive. We will update as circumstances dictate.

CIVIL CASES / INVESTIGATIONS

<u>Plaintiff</u>	<u>Cause of Action</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Status</u>
E. Jean Carroll	Defamation (rape denial)	U.S. District Court, S.D.N.Y.	Pretrial, Immunity defense on appeal
Summer Zervos	Defamation (sexual misconduct denial)	N.Y. Superior Court	Pretrial, N.Y. Supreme Court denied dismissal motion.
Mary Trump	Fraud (Inheritance dispute)	N.Y. Superior Court	Pretrial, Motion to Dismiss pending.
Ithica Capital	Fraud (hotel value)	S.D.N.Y.	Pretrial, in discovery.
J. Doe (anonymous class action)	Fraud (scam business opportunities)	S.D.N.Y.	Pretrial, denial of forced arbitration on appeal.
District of Columbia	Misuse of inauguration funds	D.C. Superior Court	Pretrial, in discovery.
Rep. Benny Thompson	Incitement/Klu Klux Klan Act	U.S. District Court, D.C.	Awaiting Defendants' responses
Rep. Eric Swalwell	Incitement/Klu Klux Klan Act	U.S. District Court, D.C.	Awaiting Defendants' responses
State of New York	Fraudulent Real Estate Practices	N.Y. Superior Court	Ongoing Discovery
State of New York	Tax Fraud (Civil Investigation)	No filings to date	Investigation
Blassingame/Hemby (D.C. Police Officers)	Incitement/Conspiracy	U.S. District Court, D.C.	Awaiting Defendants' responses
NAACP	Violation of Voting Rights Act	U.S. District Court, D.C.	Motion to Dismiss pending

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Charges</u>	<u>Status</u>
Washington D.C.	Incitement to Riot	Investigation pending
Fulton Co. GA	Election Interference	Two Grand Jury subpoenas issued
New York	Tax fraud	Subpoenas approved by U.S. Supreme Court,

Watch This Guy

by Susan Bickel & Jean Meconi

We need to keep an eye on the new executive director of the AZ Independent Redistricting Commission. Brian Schmitt was selected on a 3-2 vote with independent Chairwoman Erika Neuberg casting the deciding vote with the Republicans on the committee. Previously, Schmitt was chief of staff for Phoenix Republican Councilman, Jim Waring, and had worked for John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign.

However, he failed to disclose on his resume his work on **one** event for Sen. Martha McSally for which he was paid more than \$63,000. Schmitt asserts that he will do his job and not interfere with the work of the commission, but Democratic leaders have questioned why an independent candidate could not be found. The AIRC meets on Tuesdays at 9 am. Visit their new web page for meeting agendas and contact information: <https://irc.az.gov/>.

Slate of Up-Coming Speakers

May 10:	Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs	Topic: Voter Suppression
June 12	Pima County Sheriff Chris Nanos	Topic: Department Reorganization
July 14:	Pima County Attorney Laura Conover	Topic: Progress Report
August 9:	Pima County Supervisor Rex Scott	Topic: Progress Report
September 13:	Arizona League of Women Voters	Topic: People Power Fair Maps



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Senator Kyrsten Sinema
317 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington D.C., 20510

March 22, 2021

Dear Senator Sinema,

In 2018 the Democrats of Oro Valley were proud to support you. After your appearance at a monthly meeting, hundreds of volunteers spent thousands of volunteer hours in northwest Tucson to speed you onto victory. After the heartbreak of 2016 we were longing for leadership that knew the difference between fair and unfair, right and wrong; leadership that would protect our core democratic values. You were it. You were the crest of the blue wave that continues to grow with every election.

With more than 250 restrictive voting bills currently pending in Arizona and 47 other states, and more on the way, it is clear that the calamities of the last four years were not enough for many state legislators. 500,000 dead, not enough; 600 children permanently separated from their parents, not enough; thousands of insurgents attempting to violently overturn a fair election, not enough. And the only way they can think of to retain power is to restrict voting access for the millions of people who came together last fall to save America.

In January, our democracy was on the brink of collapse and while we have been able to take a step back from the ledge, the threat remains. Republicans are attempting to lead us right back to that ledge by making voting, the quintessential right of all Americans, so difficult that, as admitted by Arizona's own Rep. John Kavanaugh, only "quality" people will vote. Our Democratic majorities will not be enough to protect our right to vote, or address the numerous other systemic issues, unless the filibuster is removed as a partisan cudgel of the minority. The fact that President Biden won the popular election by over 7,000,000 votes yet only 43,000 votes in 3 states would have cost him the electoral college speaks volumes as to the underlying inequity of the current system.

Fixing this will not be accomplished with the current filibuster rules which allow a single Senator to kill a bill with a single sentence. Arizona desperately needs the For the People Act to pass as it addresses many of the regressive state voting laws. It stands no chance of passing under the current rules and it will be just the first of the many promises to repair America which will be broken. The rights of the millions who rely on you to do the right thing will be fundamentally damaged.

Our club is officially urging you to acknowledge the voice of your constituents by either removing the filibuster completely or, at a minimum, by limiting it to the point that the minority has to work extremely hard to exercise it. This is all that stands between fulfilling the Biden agenda and four more years of the McConnell veto. The Democrats of Oro Valley regularly sends out over 600 email notices to keep our members and subscribers abreast of all developments Democrat. We anxiously await the day we can notify them that the filibuster has been removed as an anti-democratic tool and that the For the People Act, along with the many acts to follow, can proceed as promised.

Finally, it must also be recognized that partial filibuster reforms may not work and will only delay much needed legislative reform. At that point a simple choice needs be made, save the filibuster or save democracy.

Respectfully,

The Democrats of Oro Valley
PO Box 68186
Oro Valley, AZ 85737

The Best of Biden

by Jacolyn Marshall

Covid vaccinations are on the rise and deaths are down.

During Biden's first three months in office, over 148 million vaccine doses have been administered across the nation. According to the Center for Disease Control, the number of older adults going to the ER with Covid is down significantly and deaths are below 1,000 per day for the first time since November. Overall, vaccinations have increased to 2.5 to 3 million shots per day.

Immigration reforms are taking place.

According to Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas, "our goal is a safe, legal, and orderly immigration system based on keeping borders secure, addressing the plight of children, and enabling families to stay together." Most adults and family units are still being expelled to Mexico or returned to their home country. However, unaccompanied minors, some as young as 6 or 7 years old, are not being expelled. They are being tested, quarantined, and sheltered until they can be placed with a sponsor or, for 80% of them, with a family member residing here.

Other measures include:

- rebuilding the asylum system according to the laws previously passed by Congress and reinstating the Central American Minor program to avoid the need for children to flee
- reinstating foreign aid to tackle the root causes of people fleeing
- adding hundreds of facilities to safely accommodate immigrants
- creating a system in which migrants can register by phone
- vaccinating frontline workers
- developing safe and legal pathways for children and others to reach the U.S.

President Biden: "Securing our borders does not require us to ignore the humanity of those who seek to cross them,"

Department of Justice Appointments represent a return to honor, integrity, and independence.

Once again, Biden's appointments represent the diversity of our nation: Attorney General Merrick Garland, Deputy AG Lisa Monaco, Associate AG Vanita Gupta, and Assistant AG Kristen Clarke. Biden began his announcements by affirming that their loyalty is to the law, to the Constitution, and to the American people.

In addition, the President has appointed Michael Sherwin, former acting US Attorney for DC, to be an Independent US Attorney, whose sole purpose is to supervise cases related to the January 6 attack on our US Capitol.

OPPORTUNITIES, PLEASE BE GENEROUS HELP OUR LOCAL FOOD BANK

* Please consider donating some non-perishable food items or making a cash donation to one of our local food banks during this stressful time.

*The Democrats of Oro Valley care about the health and well-being of our community.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!

* Thanks to all of you who support our brave troops.

**Please donate any of these items to one of our local veterans groups for distribution: deodorant, shaving items, toothpaste, tooth brushes, pocket novels and puzzle books.*

May Meeting

Monday, May 10
6:30 pm

Speaker: Katie Hobbs
Secretary of State

Topic: Voter Suppression