



Democrats of Oro Valley

Newsletter
March
2023

NIL CARBORUNDUM ILLEGITIMI

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Every child must be encouraged to get as much education as he has the ability for. We want this not only for his sake, but for the nation's sake. Nothing matters more to the future of our country: not military preparedness – for armed might is worthless if we lack the brain power to build a world of peace; not our productive economy – for we cannot sustain growth without trained manpower; not our democratic system of government – for freedom is fragile if citizens are ignorant.

Lyndon B. Johnson

2023 Dues Still Only \$20

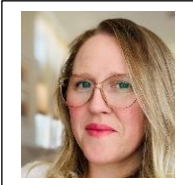
Please be sure to pay your **2023 DOV DUES** now. The price is still only \$20.00 a year. You can pay on Act Blue on the DOV website below or by sending a check to DOV at P.O. Box 68186, Oro Valley, AZ 85737. Thank you.

Dues accepted at: <https://secure.actblue.com/donate/dovdues>

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MARCH ZOOM MEETING – Guest Speaker: Abbie Hlavacek



Abbie Hlavacek, SOS Tucson Coordinator

Abbie currently serves as the Southern Arizona coordinator for Save Our Schools AZ, where she focuses on Legislative Districts 16 and 17. Her passion for education and technology has driven her to become a vocal advocate for Arizona's schools and communities to ensure that every child has an opportunity to learn and succeed.

Abbie is a product of public schools and a mom with a disability who understands the importance of providing access to education for all children. She is a mother of three and a technology professional with a focus on AI. Her experience living and organizing in the Marana area has given her a deep understanding of the unique needs of families and students throughout the community. Abbie has experience working with local parent groups and rural communities and is dedicated to ensuring every student has the resources they need to succeed. Her passion for education and technology has led her to become an advocate for schools and communities in Arizona.

What taxpayers should know about Arizona's Voucher Program by Dr. Jacolyn Marshall, EdD

After a lifelong career in public education and years of researching data on Arizona's public schools and the voucher system, I am compelled to share what I have learned.

1. The Legislature continues to violate the law that established the Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) in 2012.

The ESA law requires annual independent audits. Nevertheless, the legislature has consistently failed to fund them. Thus, the state Department of Education has not produced the annual audits required by law. Then, as now, we only have the legislature's word on how public funds are being spent on the voucher program.

2. The Legislature continues to misrepresent of the ESA program.

An examination of the ESA Quarterly Report for April 2022 reveals that the \$7,000 scholarships legislators advertise represent **an average** that is true for only **2/3** of the students who fall in the \$3,000 to \$25,000 categories. The remaining 1/3 of voucher recipients are outside of that average and fall into two additional categories. 1,792 students fall in the \$30,000 category and 2,413 fall in the \$30,000+ category. What does **\$30,000+ even mean?** \$45,000? \$60,000? More? With no limit on their awards, it is impossible to tell what they are receiving.

The legislature has intentionally deceived us, and the ESA Quarterly Reports themselves are incomplete, inadequate, and deceptive.

3. The Legislature continues to misuse public funds.

Our state legislators have also concealed the fact that ESA scholarships are **awarded 4 times a year**. Those \$7,000 scholarships are really on average **\$28,000** per child per year for 2/3 of the recipients - more than double the average tuition costs for private and parochial schools, and certainly more than the cost of homeschooling one child.

Of the remaining 1/3 of voucher recipients, 1792 students in the **\$30,000** category receive up to **\$120,000** per year or an astonishing **\$10,000 per month** per child. And the remaining 2413 students in **\$30,000+** category? What are they actually receiving? \$180,000 per year or **\$15,000 per month** per child? \$240,000 per year or **\$20,000 per month** per child? More? Again, there is no way to tell.

These voucher funds go directly into the hands of parents to spend in any way they see fit to "educate" **one child**. The amounts they are receiving are excessive, and for those claiming 2 or more children, they become truly astronomical.

The ESA Quarterly Report states, "the average **annual** award is \$15,225.39" rather than "the average **quarterly** award is \$15,225.39." The report is intentionally deceptive and again does not account for the \$30,000+ category.

4. The voucher system violates the Arizona State Constitution.

Arizona State Constitution. Article 11, section 1 states that "the legislature shall provide for a general and uniform public school system."

In 2022, the state received \$10,396 per pupil from federal, state, and local taxes to fund our public schools with an enrollment of **1.12 million K-12 students**. The state released only **\$8,773 per pupil**. The resulting deficit of \$1623 per pupil amounted to a **\$1.8 billion shortfall** for public schools.

The voucher program with an enrollment of only **11,775 K-12 students** purportedly gained that \$1.8 billion to support **publicly funded private schools**, which amounts to **\$153,000 per pupil** regardless of category. This is neither equitable, nor is it ethical.

State Constitution. Article 11, section 8 maintains that “the legislature must enact such laws as will provide for increasing funds to sufficiently maintain all public schools.”

In **2012**, the year the voucher system began, Arizona ranked 26th in the nation in funding for K-12 public schools at **\$8,388 per pupil**.

In **2022** Arizona ranked 49th in funding for public schools at **\$8,773 per pupil**. Our public schools have not had a raise for an entire decade and therefore are not being sufficiently maintained.

Meanwhile, every legislative session a new voucher expansion bill is passed, pouring more money into an already bloated system and all but starving our public schools out of existence.

Roosevelt v. Bishop (1994) found that “school financing systems which themselves create gross disparities are not general and uniform” and therefore violate the constitution.

Such was the case then, and such is the case now with the Arizona’s voucher system.

5. A forensic accounting of Arizona’s ESA is long overdue.

The evidence demonstrates that Arizona’s voucher program has been super-funding private individuals for years at the expense of our public schools. And although we know how many students are enrolled in the voucher program, we have no idea how many families are receiving funds. If most parents claim 2 or more children, it could be as few as 4,500 households.

Then, there are those mysterious \$30,000+ allocations, which in themselves require an investigation and which might help explain where the billions that have been denied our public schools over the past decade have in fact gone.

Please note: These facts and figures predate the Universal Voucher Expansion that added an additional \$1 billion to the program.

If you are as concerned as I am about the violation of ESA law, violations of our State Constitution, a decade of defunding our public schools, and the apparent fraudulent misuse of our tax dollars, you may want to contact Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes at <http://www.azag.gov/kris-mayes>, to express your concerns and request a forensic accounting of Arizona’s Empowerment Scholarship Account.

Sources:

AZ Department of Education: ESA Law & Administrative Rules A.R.S. 15-2403 – annual audit requirements.

[azschoolsnow.org/in-the-news/oversight-arizona-esa-school-voucher-program-almost-sham/](https://www.azschoolsnow.org/in-the-news/oversight-arizona-esa-school-voucher-program-almost-sham/) - missing audits.

[azed.gov/esa/eligibility-requirements](https://www.azed.gov/esa/eligibility-requirements): ESA Quarterly Reports, Quarter 3 April 2022 – enrollment; award categories.

Former House Representative Pam Powers Handley’s legislative updates – vouchers renewed quarterly.

nces.ed.gov/programs/digest – 2012: Arizona K-12 public school funding – \$8,388 per pupil.

educationdata.org: AZ public schools 2022 revenues \$10,392 per pupil; expenditures \$8,770 per pupil.

nces.ed.gov/programs/digest – 1.12 million students in Arizona public schools.



Don't worry, we're just getting started. There's lots more bad things coming, I promise. – Cruella

JUSTINE WADSACK BEGINS HER DESTRUCTIVE TOUR OF DUTY

by Dee Maitland

First, we suffered in LD11 with Mark Finchem, the faux cowboy and Oath Keeper who fortunately lost his election for Secretary of State and now has lost his lawsuit to overturn the election and has to pay all the court fees. Then there was Vince Leach, who in cahoots with Independent Redistricting Commissioner David Mehl, the Southern Arizona Leadership Council and Marana Mayor Ed Honea, gerrymandered LD11 into LD17. We were overjoyed when Leach lost his election only to find out there was worse to come. Now, we have Senator Justine Wadsack and her “Freedom Caucus” cohorts Representatives Rachel Jones and Cory McGarr.

This group has been busy advancing bad legislation: Wadsack - 53 bills; Jones – 21; and McGarr – 7. Wadsack’s bills are by far the most egregious. Prior to the 2022 election, Arizona Star journalist Tim Steller did a profile on her entitled "[LD17 Candidate has a Long Record of Litigation](#)". He ended his article as follows:

She texted me: “I’m trying to prove points by creating case law that will hopefully be used to write new laws.” If she beats Nickerson, she’ll have a chance to write those laws.

Well, she did, and she is. Wadsack’s bills have three themes: 1) revenge towards judges and lawyers; 2) increasing government assistance for her disabled child; and 3) standard Republican cruelties and nonsense.

Revenge against the Law:

She is quoted as saying “The Arizona Bar needs to go away. The people can’t fight crazy, and citizens’ rights are abused every day. Lawyers are unattainable, and the courts are corrupted.” In some of her court appearances, she served as her own counsel, so she appears to have legal aspirations. To that end she proposed bills that:

- Require preliminary hearings be within 30 days.
- Require jury trials for orders of protective injunction.
- Require jury trials on probate disputes.
- Prohibit “loco parentis” designation without consent of parents. (Every teacher acts in place of a parent).
- State Attorneys do not need to be a member of the Arizona Bar in order to be appointed judges or sit on Commission for Appellate Court Appointments.
- State the Supreme Court may not require memberships in bar associations when determining licensing of attorneys.
- Establish the concept of “unlawful animus” which can be used to avoid prosecution.
- Require easy searchable access to all court opinions.

Disabled Children:

These bills proposed by Wadsack imply a history of problems with numerous government agencies:

- Government departments must give names of people who accuse parents of child abuse to the abusers.
- Expanded services must be provided by the AZ Schools for the Deaf and Blind.
- Parents automatically become legal guardians when the disabled child reaches age 18.
- Diaper changers in schools must be of the same gender as the child and keep detailed records.
- Expands the definition of developmental disabilities for coverage.
- DCS must establish a Peer Review Team to meet with parents of child abuse.
- DCS must discover and secure VA and Social Security benefits for children in custody.
- Parents of disabled child may strap a camera to the child to monitor in schools.

Republican Crusades:

- Legislator can instruct the AZ Attorney General to investigate school boards and municipalities and withhold funds.
- Require removal of homeless encampments.
- Establish parental rights.
- Add a Class 6 felony conviction for people who violate “parents’ rights”.
- Micro-manage how municipalities use Regional Transportation Authorities.
- Prohibit Ranked Choice Voting in any election.
- Businesses may not require mask or vaccinations.
- Require history classes for high school graduation but may not use 1619 Project or critical race theory materials.
- Remove prohibitions of guns in bars, allow for concealed carry, and other changes to liquor licensing.
- Prohibit municipalities from banning gun shows.
- Employers not allowing religious exemptions for vaccines must pay damages if employee is harmed by vaccine.
- Businesses that require masks must furnish biohazard disposal containers.
- Drag shows must be termed “unlawful sex-oriented performance”.
- Every school department must maintain a list of banned books and allow parental rights to ban books.
- Prohibit gender medical treatment of minors.
- Bans any discrimination of the unvaccinated.
- Remove charter city designation.
- Ban affirmation action.
- Establish statewide rules for primary elections.
- Allow community colleges to receive state funds for non-credit workforce training courses.
- Prohibit motorcycles from passing cars in same lane.
- 10 “technical correction” bills to be used as strikers; three have been used so far.

WHEW! Except for a few bills to assist disabled children and one expanding workforce training at community colleges, Wadsack’s bills do not benefit her constituents. She does not care as she obviously is on a mission to vanquish any person, city, or agency that offends her sense of entitlement and angst.

JUSTINE WADSACK MUST BE DEFEATED IN 2024!

The Best of Biden by *Jacolyn Marshall*



Health & Safety

- EPA ordered Ohio railroad to clean up contaminated air and water from chemical spill.
- Transportation Secretary released a package of reforms to improve railroad safety.
- Treasury Department invoked sanctions against a Mexican ring supplying chemicals to make fentanyl.
- CDC added Covid-19 to the list of routine immunizations and declared the flu vaccine worked well.
- TSA intercepted 6,542 guns in 2022 at airport checkpoints across the country, a record high.
- Biden directed CDC, EPA & FEMA to check on families affected by the toxic train derailment in Ohio and connect them with appropriate governmental resources and non-profit organizations.

Economy

- Highest retail sales since 2021 and strong jobs report for January indicate the economy remains durable.
- Consumer price increases eased again in January, slowing inflation to 6.4%.
- US sees a two-year drop in medical debt due to expansion of ACA and Covid relief funds.
- Commerce Department reported economy expanded by 2.7% in 4th quarter of 2022 despite inflation.
- Labor Department announced US employers posted 10 M job openings for past 20 months.
- Biden's budget proposal aims to cut deficits by nearly \$3 trillion over the next decade.

Environment & Climate Change

- EPA will award \$27B to states and nonprofits to invest in clean energy projects nationwide.
- EPA awarded \$1B for projects to clean up hazardous waste landfills, mines, and manufacturing sites.
- US Postal Service buys 9,250 electric vans, 14,000 charging stations, and plans to go all-electric in 2026.
- EPA imposed tighter limits on wastewater pollution from coal-burning power plants to protect streams.

Justice

- DOJ released \$200M to help states administer red-flag laws and other crisis-intervention programs.
- DOJ declared those injured in the January insurrection can sue former President Trump.
- DOJ found Louisville police violated constitutional rights of their Black community.
- DOJ will examine the use of specialized police units nationwide and produce a guide for police chiefs.

Government

- WH stated the three low-flying unidentified objects shot down posed a risk to civilian air traffic.
- WH cybersecurity plan bolsters protections and makes companies liable for substandard products.
- US recovered \$286M sent out to fraudulent pandemic relief programs.

International Relations

- Biden met with leaders of Bucharest Nine nations to solidify partnerships and pledge US support.
- US and French troops conducted combat drills in Romania to test NATO defenses in the region.
- US sent \$85M, a rescue team, and medical supplies to Turkey & Syria following the massive earthquake.
- US has blacklisted six Chinese entities in response to Beijing's intelligence collection campaigns.
- US military in partnership with Syrian Democratic forces led a targeted raid killing key IS commander.
- US Ambassador appointed to head UN World Food Program, world's largest humanitarian organization.
- First Lady Jill Biden spent 5 days in 2 African countries, highlighting US efforts to help empower them.
- US military and allies in northeast Syria launched a campaign against the Islamic State group.
- US and UN member nations passed a treaty to protect biodiversity in the high seas, a first of its kind.

International Relations: Ukraine

- Biden flew to Ukraine to meet with Zelenskyy, consider next steps, honor the fallen, and pledge an additional \$500M in aid.
- VP Harris announced the US has determined Russia committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine.
- US Secretary of State and Russian Foreign Minister met briefly at G-20 conference signaling high-level lines of communication between Washington and Moscow remain open.
- US & G-7 allies announced new sanctions targeting Russia's metal and mining sector, among others.
- Biden and German Chancellor met at the WH and agreed to maintain intense pressure on Russia.

DOV General Meetings *by Chair Mike Dayton*

Although some of our members have expressed a desire to return to in-person meetings, for now our DOV general meetings will remain by Zoom on the second Monday of the month for all the following reasons.

- DOV investigated returning to the large meeting room at Oro Valley library. Presently the library closes at 6:00 PM and visitors are asked to leave 15 minutes prior to that. Meeting early enough in the day to accommodate the library's schedule would preclude working members from attending.
- Saturday meetings conflict with family activities and other obligations.
- Some of our members are still concerned about COVID, while others are concerned about driving in the dark.
- Additionally, it is much easier to find willing guest speakers to join us on Zoom rather than having to travel to us.
- Zoom meetings allow us to have speakers outside of Pima County.

DOV will be hosting in-person Social Hours two or three times a year to keep in touch with our friends.

Proof that Republicans cannot win without cheating *by Dee Maitland*

This week House Democrats protested by voting no on all bills after Republicans moved the goalposts for our bills to get a floor vote — now requiring 16 Republican signatures on a sheet to get a vote. @lauraforAZ talks about that “deeply un-Democratic” experience on her HB2075.



You can view Laura's explanation of how Arizona Republicans sabotage bills proposed by Democrats at: [Laura Terech Explains](#)

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, toothbrushes, pocket novels and puzzle books.*

April Zoom Meeting

Monday, April 10
6:30 – 8:00 pm

Guest Speaker:
Pat Maisch
Moms Demand Action

Topic:
Gun Safety