



**2024** ***KEEP AZ FREE***  
***POLICY RESOURCE MANUAL***

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DON'T BET ON NET ZERO:

# Why Eliminating Fossil Fuels Would Be Catastrophic!



Governments, corporations and utilities are adopting the Paris Climate Accord “Net Zero by 2050” pledge and related carbon neutral policies that eliminate the use of all fossil fuels to avoid “cataclysmic climate change.” However, if implemented, “net zero” mandates will ultimately thrust millions of people into energy poverty, robbing them of accessible, affordable, and plentiful food, water, and healthcare, as fossil fuels are and will likely remain the fundamental building blocks of the modern world.



## Climate Change is Real, Man-Made Climate Catastrophe is Not

Since the 1960's doomsday predictions have been peddled by people in government, science, education and politics. These fatalistic ideas have successfully captured headlines and the collective imagination over the decades - assertions such as “there will be a new Ice Age by 2020” and “entire nations would be wiped off the planet by 2000 due to a warming planet.” However, none of these sensationalized claims about ecological collapse have materialized. Why have these environmental alarmists repeatedly gotten it wrong? A combination of ignorance and a political agenda.

## The Modeling is Bunk

Though modeling has its value, models don't predict the future. The problem is that assumptions are made, the input data are not necessarily causally related, and complex formulas are used to force fit trendlines that accurately reflect past events to imply reliable future predictions. Therefore, they only provide some insight into what happened in the past and are very unlikely to predict future scenarios. Aside from the inherent limitations of modeling, what winds up getting distilled, packaged, and distributed to policy makers and the public is typically far worse, including cherry-picked data, context dropping, a refusal to recognize benefits while overstating costs, and lies of omission. This typical manipulation of facts reveals an obvious hidden agenda.

## What Climate Alarmists Are Really After

Climate alarmists are not opposed to fossil fuels as much as they are opposed to “excessive” energy usage. It is common knowledge that transitioning to intermittent and unreliable sources such as

wind and solar will lead to black outs. That seems to be the point. To Net Zero adherents, the real end goal is a radical political agenda to control and suppress consumption of energy altogether. After all, it was only less than a decade ago, environmentalists were evangelizing a transition from coal powered plants to natural gas. As soon as fracking technology enabled the industry to efficiently utilize new sources of natural gas, making it abundant and affordable, the environmental lobby turned on it too. They also consistently oppose the expansion of nuclear generation as well as hydropower, both of which produce energy with no emissions. These perplexing positions become easily explained when their motivations are clearly understood.

## The Agenda is Hiding in Plain Sight

An article published in the New Yorker just this year argues, “A green-energy boom...would come with ‘monstrous ecological costs,’ because of the mining for the minerals needed to produce and use electricity at the required scale.” Instead, the recommendation is “that we return ‘to living standards of the 1960s’ so that we can ‘consume less, travel less, build less, eat less wastefully.’” Finally, “If we are to avoid ecological collapse,” ...we must pursue “contraction and simplification, a *downsizing of the economy and population*, so that Homo sapiens can prosper within the regenerative and assimilative capacity of the biosphere.”

A journalist for the Los Angeles Times recently wrote, “Again and again, I’ve found myself asking: Would it be easier and less expensive to limit climate change — and its deadly combination of worsening heat, fire and drought and flood — if we were willing to live with the occasional blackout?”

In other words, the agenda is to normalize blackouts and to generate less energy to limit growth.



# THE CASE FOR FOSSIL FUELS

The discovery that fossil fuels, an abundant supply of raw material, can be turned into energy set up an unparalleled advancement in human flourishing. Intentionally ignored by the Net Zero alarmists are the immense benefits this previously unknown and untapped source of power provides. The industrialization enabled by fossil fuel energy has lifted billions out of energy poverty, increased life expectancy, created food abundance, and provided access to more clean water than ever before. The truth is that fossil fuels have made every individual more productive, they continue to make us resilient to weather and climate, and they are the only source of affordable, reliable, and abundant energy.



## ✓ Fossil Fuels are Affordable

Coal and natural gas are the most cost-effective sources of energy. Solar and wind are not affordable, which is why they require trillion-dollar tax credits and incentives from congress to be “competitive.” As recently as 2021, the Arizona Corporation Commission released a study that showed the pursuit of Net Zero by 2050 would cost ratepayers \$6 billion. The City of Phoenix recognized this in its 2021 Climate Action Plan, acknowledging their Net Zero aspirations for residents would cost the average ratepayer at least \$720 a year. And in practice, our neighbor California provides a clear case study on the unaffordability of “renewables.” There, residents pay 66% more for electricity than the rest of the country and during the past two summers, while experiencing rolling blackouts, faced double digit spikes in rates.

## ✓ Fossil Fuels are Reliable

Fossil fuels are uniquely reliable as they can be supplied 24/7 at an affordable cost whereas “renewables” such as wind and solar are intermittent and rely on when the sun shines and the wind blows. Fossil fuels can also be transported and stored, providing extraordinary versatility in the types of machines they can power. Again, “renewables” prove woefully unsustainable in this regard, with battery technology continuing to be expensive and less efficacious.

The inadequacy of “renewables” to deliver reliable energy was exposed in Texas during the winter freeze of 2021, where a quarter of their generation comes from wind farms. This was known. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the regulatory body responsible for monitoring the region’s grid reliability, warned that Texas was at risk for capacity shortfalls. After years of shedding fossil fuel assets especially coal, combined with extreme weather conditions and non-weatherized renewable technology – 10 million Texans were left without power. Over 200 people died.

## ✓ Fossil Fuels Create Energy Abundance

Most of us take our energy abundance for granted. To this day, three billion people in the world live on less electricity than a refrigerator and a third of the world still uses wood or dung for heating and cooking. The forced “transition” of energy production to meet Net Zero targets would thrust the rest of the world into energy poverty too. Energy abundance means cleaner homes, more productivity, increased food production, greater resiliency to the climate. The path to energy poverty looks like Germany, where high costs for electricity caused by lower supply (as a result of Net Zero policies) have forced people to chop down trees and burn wood to stay warm because they can’t afford to turn on their heater.

## ✓ Fossil Fuels Make Us Resilient

Few discoveries have done more to make us resilient to our climate than fossil fuels. Climate alarmists claim their Net Zero plans improve resiliency, but it’s necessary to understand what they mean by the term. For them, it means shielding the “natural world” from the impacts of human activity. For us, it means protecting humans from a naturally hostile environment. Since the mass adoption of fossil fuels, climate related deaths have plummeted. We can heat ourselves in the cold, cool ourselves in the heat and live in areas with severe natural events, including hurricanes, tornadoes, and earthquakes because we are able to build structures to withstand whatever nature throws at us. And when governments go full steam ahead in their Net Zero goals, banning carbon-based fertilizers to, in their words, be more “resilient,” you arrive in the position of Sri Lanka – a nation that once overflowed with agriculture to one plunged into famine. Continued use of fossil fuels will make us more and more resilient to ensure we have not just food, water, shelter, but abundance and prosperity.



## HELP US STOP NET ZERO!



LEARN MORE

# THE PROBLEM:



# The EPA is Mandating Air Quality Standards that are Impossible to Achieve.

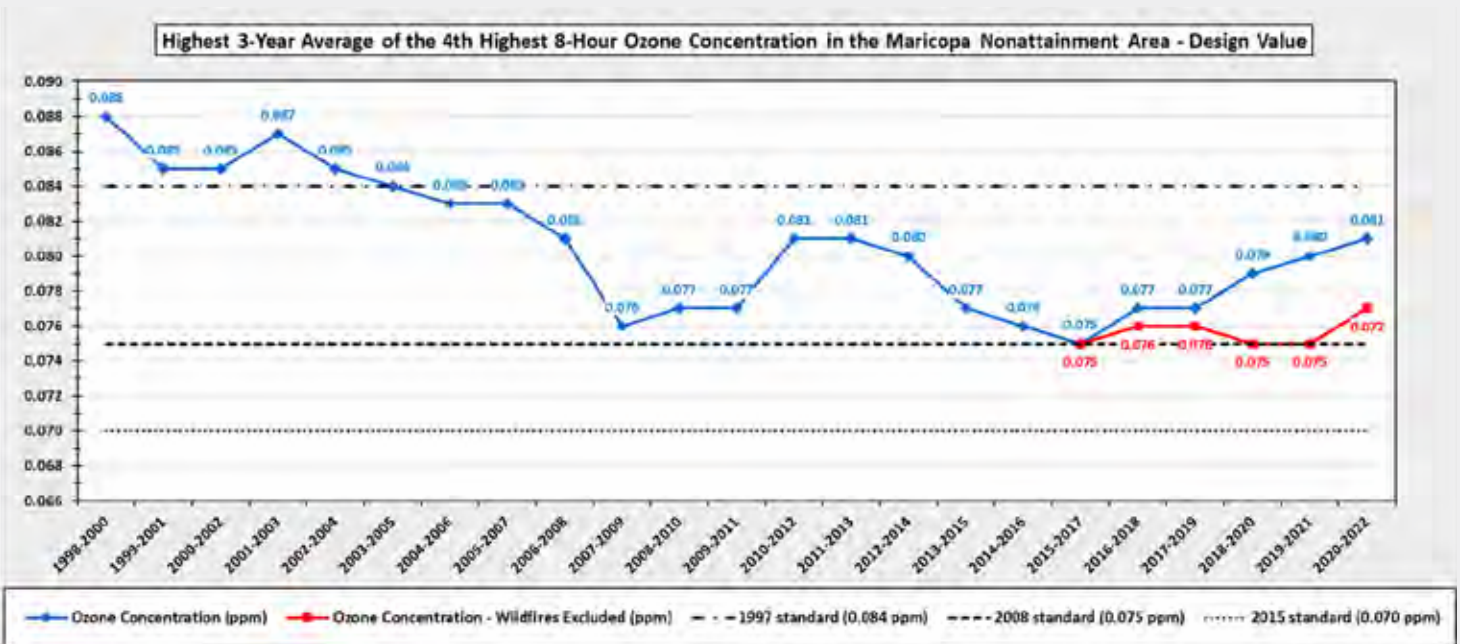


In 2015, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) adopted new air quality standards for ozone, from 75ppb to 70ppb. Most of the ozone in Maricopa County is the result of naturally occurring events or from emissions produced outside of the country (primarily from China). For example, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the precursor to ozone, are generally created through reactions to hot climates, wildfires, biomass breakdown, etc. As these high ozone levels occur beyond the scope and control of the citizens of Arizona, it is widely acknowledged that implementing dramatic policies will not result in compliance with the 2015 standards.

As shown by the chart below, for the past 30 years Arizona has not achieved ozone levels below 75ppb, even subtracting wildfires. In fact, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, ozone levels increased despite the fact that vehicular travel and business activity was substantially reduced.

Even the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), the entity responsible for crafting an air quality plan for the region, has issued public statements acknowledging that the removal of all four million internal combustion engine (ICE) vehicles in the metropolitan Phoenix area would not bring Maricopa County into compliance with the ozone standards.

On September 16, 2022, the EPA reclassified Maricopa County from minimal nonattainment to a moderate nonattainment area for ozone limits under the Clean Air Act. This triggers an automatic “sanctions clock” that requires compliance to avoid draconian punishments such as shutting down permit authorizations for emitting businesses such as manufacturers in the region as well as the withholding of federal highway funding.





# DANGER:

**EPA's Control Measures  
Include Radical CA-Style  
"Air Quality" Mandates**

In early March, MAG released a proposed list of control measures to reduce ozone in Maricopa County in anticipation of the next "check-in" with the EPA in June 2023. Of the options provided, MAG is estimating that residents and businesses in Maricopa County need to cut ozone emissions by 50% in one year to comply.

In short, any combination of MAG's proposed control measures to meet the EPA's impossible standards would cost billions of dollars, destroy our quality of life and devastate Arizona's economy.

**Many of the recommendations have been imported from California and include:**

- ✘ **Banning gas-powered vehicles by 2035,**
- ✘ **Phasing out residential and commercial gas appliances,**
- ✘ **Limiting the use of gas-powered lawn equipment,**
- ✘ **Prohibiting the use of recreational vehicles (boats, quads, etc) on high ozone days.**

Additionally, under current state statute, the Arizona Governor has broad emergency power authority to declare an "air quality state of emergency" (A.R.S 49-465) and "may prohibit, restrict or condition: motor vehicle traffic; the operation of retail, commercial, manufacturing, governmental, industrial, or similar activity; operation of incinerators, the burning or other consumption of fuels; the burning of any materials whatsoever; and any and all other activity which contributes or may contribute to the emergency." This would be a manufactured emergency, as Arizona has grown and thrived for decades under the current air quality conditions.

# ✓ SOLUTION:

**Oppose Any Control  
Measures that Sacrifice Our  
Economy and Our Freedoms!**



The Biden Administration is attempting to conscript Arizona into adopting their "Green New Deal" policies under threat of sanction, knowing full well their standards are impossible to meet. Accepting any of these harmful policies should be out of the question. If Arizona agrees to adopt these MAG recommendations, they will become a part of our "State Implementation Plan" which holds the weight of federal law and is a one-way-ratchet on regulation.

Arizona lawmakers must stand up to the Biden Administration and urge Congress to stop the EPA from imposing coercive and likely unconstitutional penalties on Arizona to comply with an ozone standard that is impossible to attain through any of the control measures being considered.

**JOIN OUR  
GRASSROOTS!**



**GET INVOLVED!**

THE PROBLEM:

# Governor Katie Hobbs' Manufactured Water Crisis



For nearly a century Arizona has been a national model for how to properly manage and develop water resources. As a result, Arizona has enjoyed decades of economic growth while welcoming millions of new residents to live and work in our beautiful state.

Unfortunately, the future prosperity of Arizona was thrown into turmoil when Governor Katie Hobbs held a press conference (June 1, 2023) claiming Arizona is suffering from a water shortage and declared a moratorium on single family residential home development. Her decision was based upon dubious, unaudited water models prepared in secret by the Arizona Department of Water resources.



THE TRUTH:

**The truth is that Arizona has enough water from existing sources to continue growing for another century, with no impacts on current residents and business owners.**

Yet a coalition of so-called water experts, government bureaucrats, radical environmentalists and profit-driven special interests are working with Governor Katie Hobbs to manufacture a water crisis for their own political and policy agenda.

## Arizona Is Not Running out of Water

Contrary to the claims that water supplies are dwindling in Arizona, the facts point to just the opposite. In reality, annual water consumption is lower today than it was 1990 despite our state population DOUBLING to 7.2 million residents! That is not a misprint—we have welcomed millions of new residents to the Grand Canyon State and are using less water in the process.

### How is this possible?

Through technological advancements in water reuse, water reclamation, increased water efficiency and the conversion of agriculture land for single family residential development, Arizona has more than enough surface and groundwater available to meet the demands of current and future water users.

## ADWR Water Modeling is Defective

Currently water policy in Arizona is being driven by so-called “expert modeling” being produced by the Arizona Department of Water Resources. Though modeling can provide some value when evaluating a complex issue, it should not be the sole basis for regulatory or policy decision making. The reason is that models are incapable of predicting the future and will be biased toward the assumptions made by the developers of the formula.

This holds true with the unaudited model prepared by ADWR projecting future water availability in Maricopa County. After evaluating the assumptions, it has been discovered that ADWR excluded many water-saving measures, including future recharge from effluent and the conversion of agriculture land into residential use. Whether this was unintentional or an attempt to cherry-pick data to manufacture an outcome, it demonstrates the inherent limitations of the modeling process.

## Moratorium on New Home Construction is Nonsensical and Economically Damaging

Even more perplexing than the claims that Arizona is running out of water is the “solution” provided by Gov. Hobbs and ADWR: shutting down future single family home construction in Maricopa County. In addition to destroying BILLIONS in economic activity and further exacerbating the housing shortage crisis, the housing moratorium will likely increase water usage in the region, for two reasons:

- 1) New single family home construction is the only industry required in Arizona to demonstrate a 100-year assured water supply. Commercial, industrial and high-density apartments—all of which use more water per acre than single family residential—are exempt from this requirement. By shutting down new single family home construction while continuing to allow the unlimited development of water intensive uses like industrial and commercial is nonsensical and undercuts Hobbs’ public claims that Arizona is running out of water.
- 2) A large portion of new single family residential construction in Arizona occurs on agriculture land. This is significant because when Ag land is converted into residential, water usage declines by

as much as 70%. So when a farm is sold and homes are built, water usage goes down! Thanks to Governor Hobbs’ building moratorium, this water saving activity will no longer occur.

## Housing Shutdown Part of Larger Anti-Growth Agenda

After declaring a water crisis and announcing a moratorium on new home construction, Governor Hobbs spent the next several weeks telling corporate CEO’s, business organizations and the media that Arizona does in fact have more than enough water for future growth. On the surface this makes no sense—how can we be out of water for new single-family homes but have enough water for everything else?

That is because the moratorium was never about Arizona running out of water, it was to reorient and change the type of growth allowed to occur in our state. For decades it has been the goal of environmentalists, city planners and other liberal interest groups to impose high density urban development and enact growth boundaries around communities. Most residents strongly oppose replacing single family home construction with more condos and apartments, but that is exactly what has been set in motion by Governor Hobbs’ building moratorium.



# Pro-Growth Water Solutions for 2024

## 1 Say NO to California-Style Water Regulations

Various special interest groups and environmental organizations are attempting to exploit Governor Hobbs’ manufactured water crisis to enact radical water laws designed to increase high density urban growth or create California-style water management areas in rural areas. These efforts to create artificial growth boundaries in Arizona must be rejected.

## 2 Reform the ADWR Modeling Process

If modeling is going to be used as a tool to craft water policy, then significant reforms are needed to the modeling process. This would include requiring a public process for all future modeling and allowing for input on the modeling assumptions to ensure an honest accounting of existing and future water supplies.

## 3 Eliminate Roadblocks Preventing Conversion of Agriculture Land to Residential Use

Converting agriculture land to single family residential reduces water usage by as much as 70%, yet existing water laws and Governor Hobbs’ building moratorium are preventing this activity. Action is needed to rescind the housing moratorium and eliminate any regulatory barriers preventing the conversion of agricultural land to residential use.

**LEARN MORE!**





THE PROBLEM:

# 15-Minute Cities: Modern Dystopias



The “15-minute city” is an urban design concept that aims to provide people with every necessity for daily life within a 15-minute walk, bike ride, or transit ride. Advocates of this concept claim that they create people-centric communities that provide more choice and access, help save the environment due to reduced carbon emissions, improve public health, and enhance “equity.”

In reality, 15-minute cities are a pipedream of central planning bureaucrats that rely on increasingly coercive measures to manipulative the way people live. These include car-free zones, limiting areas of travel, and punishing citizens for driving outside of any “permitted zones.” Put into practice, 15-minute cities will crush industry, create a surveillance state, impede travel freedom, reduce choice and opportunity, and harm vulnerable people.



## Suburban Sprawl Increases Opportunity

Prior to the invention of the private vehicle, most people lived in dense cities that clustered around factories and industrial businesses. This was not necessarily by choice, but a necessity driven by limited mobility. The invention of the automobile changed everything about how people choose to live and organize communities.

In the words of philosopher and professor at University of Virginia Loren E. Lomasky, “because we have cars we can, more than any other people in history, choose where we will live and where we will work, and separate these two choices from each other. We can more easily avail ourselves of near and distant pleasures, at a schedule tailored to individual preference. In our choice of friends and associates, we are less constrained by accidents of geographical proximity. In our comings and goings, we depend less on the concurrence of others. We have more capacity to gain observational experience of an extended immediate environment. And for all of the preceding options, access is far more open and democratic than it was in preautomobile eras.”

**Today, we live in an amazing built environment where people have immense opportunity and choice in where they live, work, recreate, and explore. Private vehicles have directly shaped our communities and land use patterns, created suburban sprawl, and upended the more restrictive urban cores of the past.**

## 15-Minute Cities Restrict Travel, Choice, and Access

Though 15-minute cities are sold as providing more choice and access, by purportedly giving people “additional options” such as walking and biking, it is a ruse that always requires the diminishment of roads and comes at the expense of drivers. In 2020, the first official 15-minute city was implemented in Paris, France by Mayor Anne Hidalgo during the COVID lockdowns. From 2021 until 2026, 112 miles of permanent separate bike lanes will be built in Paris, in an attempt to be a “100% cyclable” city. The goal is to “expel cars” and eventually execute a “total ban on gas-powered cars by 2030.” Despite the dramatic upheaval to the city’s infrastructure, including converting one of the most heavily used expressways in Paris into one big sidewalk, they failed in their attempt to force Parisians to abandon their vehicles and instead the fewer roads available are choked with congestion as residents try to escape the city to access their jobs.

The misery of this induced gridlock is not a problem for Mayor Hidalgo and 15-minute city sympathizers. The solution? Quit your job and find one that is on a public transit route or within walking distance. Or just work from home. It helped that COVID lockdowns socialized these behaviors. In fact, COVID was seen as, “an unmissable opportunity to accelerate the shift to...urban planning approaches such as the 15-minute city,” according to C40 Cities, a global organization of local governments working together to save the world from “cataclysmic climate change.”

Ultimately, 15-minute cities are incompatible with an economy and society self-organized around responding to individual choice and preference. It is the personal vehicle and the corresponding sprawl that provides people with the mobility freedom to access the schools, healthcare facilities, and churches of their choice.

## 15-Minute Cities Harm Vulnerable People

If a 15-minute city could work for anyone, it would be the young, single, and physically fit individual. Beyond that, it fails. Especially harmed, however, are more vulnerable individuals such as the elderly, disabled, children, and pregnant women. Some people simply cannot walk or bike. Fixed transit routes provide little flexibility to accommodate families with small children or provide comfort to someone in a wheelchair and are often riddled with crime that particularly endangers the defenseless. Places such as Tucson and Tempe have committed to orienting their land use policies around 15-minute city concepts in their "Climate Action Plans." It's not just inconvenient to walk or bike in these cities, it can be downright fatal. It should be obvious that in places as unbearably hot as Arizona for months out of the year, or as rainy as Portland, Oregon that has pledged to be 90% walkable and cyclable by 2030, are inane places to relegate people to walking and biking to get around.

## 15-Minute Cities Usher in a Surveillance State

When cities inevitably fail to convince people to adopt these "other options" and they continue to use their cars, governments revert to increasingly coercive policies to force the behavior change. In England, many towns started with trial "low traffic neighborhoods (LTNS)," which block cars from entering certain areas or roads by placing barriers, planters, and prohibitive road signs. When this didn't work, boroughs such as Canterbury installed cameras that read the license plates of automobiles that drive through restricted areas to automatically fine drivers. According to one local media outlet, "short, direct journeys across the city - whether to supermarkets, retail parks, or GP surgeries - will be prohibited in a bid to encourage residents to walk, cycle, or use public transport." This level of invasiveness and control provoked thousands of residents to protest, yet council officials maintained unconvincingly that the traffic restrictions will not "be used to confine people" to a given area because "everyone can go through all the filters at any time by bus, bike, taxi, scooter, or walking."

## What's Wrong With Giving People Everything They Need?

It's absurd to believe that by building more bike lanes and creating more density you are improving people's health, saving the environment, and advancing justice. In reality, if you support 15-minute cities for moral reasons, you aren't "saving the world," you're just riding a bike.

At the philosophic crux of 15-min cities is the idea that government can fulfill every want and need of people. This is fundamentally flawed, because it fails to understand human nature and accept the diversity of individuals. People do not want to be "satisfied", they want to be fulfilled by challenge, exercising agency, and adventure. These are also complex problems, way outside the scope and expertise of a central planning bureaucrat.

The idea that systems can be erected and improved to provide complete equity isn't new, even as it relates to the discipline of urban planning.

"We think that high standards of health and sanitation and of life in general can be achieved in an environment where all it takes to leave the built-up area is an easy walk. In other words, the limits of the whole area should be kept within the range of a twenty-minute walk."

This quote sounds as if it was said by a modern-day proponent of 15-minute cities. It is actually from the 1968 book, "The Ideal Communist City" written by several soviet architects from the University of Moscow. The book aimed to dismantle the concept of private property and suburban life. "The new city is a world belonging to each and all."

As to who coined the term "15-Minute Cities," that would be Carlos Morena, a French-Columbian professor and former member of Columbia's M-19 an openly known communist group.



## The Solution is CHOICE & FREEDOM.

People vote with their feet, and that vote is overwhelmingly people choosing to live in suburban communities, desiring private homes with driveways and garages, and a backyard. Some people do choose to live in mixed-use developments, in apartment complexes, relegating themselves to relying on walking, biking, and taking transit. The market naturally provides that option to the minority who want it, and that's good. That is different than central planners redesigning existing communities, selling some utopian vision, and forcing it on people.



## HELP PROTECT OUR COMMUNITIES!



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# THE TRUTH ABOUT VISION ZERO

Cities around the country are adopting the Vision Zero initiative. Vision Zero implements **road diets** and traffic calming measures that reduce speeds, **eliminate or narrow lane miles for cars**, and create a “pedestrian scale” transportation network. Vision Zero tactics **delay emergency vehicles** and **make drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists less safe**.

Despite the stated purpose being to eliminate all traffic fatalities on our roadways, a deceptively worthy goal, Vision Zero is an anti-data, anti-engineering, and anti-car agenda. They don't always call it Vision Zero, instead it's masked with terms like “complete streets,” “safe systems,” “streetscaping,” “walkable communities,” “transit-oriented development,” and many others.

## Vision Zero is Funded by The Progressive Left, Corporate Opportunists & Pete Buttigieg

Vision Zero is underwritten by Community Initiatives, a nonprofit out of the Bay area which acts as a clearinghouse for liberal causes, many disguised to appear non-ideological. It receives money from a hoard of corporate sponsors that stand to benefit from having fewer personally owned vehicles on the road and is subsidized by taxpayers through billions in grants from the USDOT. (See page 2)

## Vision Zero is Driven by Radical Ideology

Secretary Pete Buttigieg compared road fatalities to “gun violence,” with the implied solution being to take cars off the road. According to a resource on Vision Zero's website Untokening1.0.com, “oppressive systems such as ableism, toxic masculinity and white supremacy undermine the free expression of marginalized communities and perpetuate narrow approaches to streets safety that fuel inequities and exclusion – and must be abolished.” In other words, roads are racist.

## Vision Zero = Zero Vision

The data collected and analyzed shows Vision Zero makes streets LESS safe in the cities that have adopted it.



Denver, Colorado adopted their Vision Zero plan in 2017 and in the five years since then, traffic fatalities have increased 33%.



Los Angeles, California adopted Vision Zero in 2015, but in 2021 they experienced a 20-year high in fatalities on their roadways.

Vision Zero also adversely impacts emergency response times. According to an article in the New York Post from 2019 the NYC Uniformed Fire Association made the statement,

**“Vision Zero is fully intended to save lives from traffic accidents, but by [the city] adding in concrete barriers and flowerpots and everything else... you're basically eliminating the ability for emergency service vehicles to get around.”**

## VISION ZERO IS HERE IN ARIZONA



Cities including Prescott, Flagstaff, Tolleson, Scottsdale, Phoenix, Mesa, and Glendale have all received millions this year to fund Vision Zero projects to rip out and narrow roads, add bike and pedestrian paths and subsidize transit projects.



# TO FUND VISION ZERO

Instead of rational and effective transportation projects, the U.S. Department of Transportation spends billions providing local grants to advance their woke ideologies and a politicized agenda. Watch out for these grants in your city!

## 1 Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)

Up to \$5 billion funneled to local governments who take the Vision Zero pledge and funds projects that increase congestion and make roads less safe. For example, in Louisville-Jefferson County, KY, \$21.4 million was given to put people on road diets —narrowing lanes to add more bike paths, roundabouts, sidewalks, and more.

## 2 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)

Alots \$12 billion for “equitable” infrastructure projects. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg said RAISE will “help communities...realize their visions for new infrastructure projects, fighting climate change, advancing equity... and more.” This year, \$25 million was awarded to New York City for 173 electric micro-mobility (electric scooters) charging and storage stations. This is to “encourage” the use of micro-mobility, discourage driving, and exacerbates homelessness.

## 3 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program

Gives away \$1 billion over the next five years for projects to “reconnect” cities that were “disconnected” by freeways and roads, because “freeways are barriers.” \$5.35 million was awarded to Tampa, FL for new bike and pedestrian paths to “reconnect” the city that was “eroded by I-275.” This will supposedly heal the “social isolation” for the black communities created by roads and freeways that the administration has called racist.

## 4 Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Administers up to \$108 billion to bailout bankrupt public transit systems across the country and fund failed projects like light rail, commuter rail, trolleys, streetcar, and electric buses. Nationally, \$1.7 billion has been distributed for low or no emissions “green” buses and charging infrastructure. King County, WA alone received \$33.5 million to purchase electric buses that will cost more to operate and strain the grid.

## 5 Multimodal Project Discretionary Grant Opportunity

Gives away up to \$5.5 billion for various multimodal projects, which is essentially a slush fund for wasteful projects that bureaucrats want but people will never use. This year \$78 million was sent to Philadelphia to “proactively address[ing] racial equity” by building “pedestrian refuge islands,” creating additional pedestrian and bike paths, adding transit lanes, and more.

## 6 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART)

Grants \$100 million a year to local governments to integrate new technology into transportation infrastructure such as license plate readers, red light cameras, and unmanned ticketing systems to track drivers and automate enforcement. In 2022, Arizona received \$1.75 million for Vehicle-to-Everything technology and “digitizing roadways” which facilitates the government’s access to private information with invasive sensors, cameras, and real-time data collected from your vehicle.

Despite the diverse geography, varied local needs and unique problems, these grants all offer the same “solution:” fund projects that reduce driving in an effort to manufacture environments that facilitate only walking, biking, and taking public transit. That’s how you know it is an agenda being pushed, not localized, rational transportation planning.



# HELP US STOP VISION ZERO!



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THE PROBLEM:

# The Government is Trying to **FORCE YOU OUT** of Your Car!



Across the country, transportation planning has been radicalized. Instead of prioritizing projects that benefit drivers, planners want to make it less convenient and more expensive to travel by personal vehicle to change behavior and get people out of their cars. This is why you see millions of your tax dollars being wasted on ripping up or narrowing perfectly good roads, operating empty buses and trains, and cramming bike lanes and expansive pedestrian paths on major arterials and other “traffic calming” measures. All this to reduce your Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). And if they can’t inconvenience you out of your car, they will tax you out of it.



## VMT Taxes Are Easily Weaponized Against Drivers

The reality is VMT taxes are being used as a cudgel to manipulate people’s behavior to drive an ideological agenda. A VMT tax rate can be varied based upon income to “achieve” economic equity, ensuring some people pay nothing while the middle class subsidizes the lion share. VMT taxes can also be exploited for radical climate policies punishing families who drive SUVs and targeting workers and their trucks. Premiums may be tacked on to change when and where you drive with the use of “low emission zones” such as those in London.

## VMT Taxes Require the Government to Track You

To implement VMT taxes, governments rely on invasive technology including devices placed in or connected to your vehicle to track how many miles you drive. To ensure you pay, they install traffic cameras that read license plates to automatically issue fines. They use e-gates to track your movement to record where, when, and how many miles you have driven. The truth is VMT taxes cannot be implemented without the government invading your right to privacy.

## VMT Taxes Will Cost You

VMT reduction policies increase congestion, which cost Phoenix drivers \$3.7 billion, more than \$1,200 per commuter, in 2019 alone. It also impacts commercial trucks moving goods in the region, increasing the costs of everything we buy. New York City instituted congestion pricing, placing a premium on access to jobs. Washington State adopted VMT reduction targets which will inevitably require capping how many miles you can drive, and then charging you for exceeding your allotment. Individual and commercial drivers already pay in multiple ways to maintain the roads they drive on. A VMT tax will only add to the burden.

## The VMT Threat In Arizona

Many cities in Arizona have adopted Climate Action Plans with explicit goals of “reducing our reliance on single-occupancy vehicles” and reducing overall VMT. Scottsdale recently voted to remove two of the four heavily used lanes on 68th street to add protected bike paths with the purported goal of “increasing access” to “alternative modes” of transportation to reduce car use. The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) has argued that their 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, supported by a twenty year multi-billion-dollar tax, increases investments in transit which, in their words, is key to “taking cars off the street” and “lowering vehicle miles traveled” in cars.

# ✓ THE SOLUTION: FREEDOM TO MOVE ACT

If placed on the ballot and passed by the voters in 2024, it would protect Arizonans from measures that inhibit our freedom to travel by prohibiting the government from **TRACKING, TAXING, OR LIMITING VMT.**



## WHY WE SHOULD PROTECT OUR FREEDOM TO MOVE:

### ✓ Autonomy

The personal automobile has been one of if not *the* greatest technological advancements in human history. It is a reflection and extension of many of our personal liberties. It embodies our *autonomy* – the ability to choose where we go, when we go, and who we go with. Personal automobiles require less preplanning, accommodating spontaneous action, and expand our range of options.

### ✓ Privacy

*Private* vehicles reflect our right to *privacy* with the ability to commute and travel in our own vehicle, alone or with the company of our choosing. That privacy ensures individuals may listen to what they like and speak with whom they wish without censoring their speech.

### ✓ Freedom of Association

Cars expand our *freedom of association*. No longer is the decision of where we live tied to where we work. The car has freed us to choose to live where and by whom we want, send our kids to the schools of our choice, and work where and for whom we want – each decision made independently of the other.

### ✓ Democratization of Transportation

The automobile has been an unparalleled advancement for human flourishing, responsible for the democratization of transportation. It has placed within the reach of *everyone* the ability to travel when and where they want, with little limitation on the distance, at a cost almost all can afford. It has connected more people to more jobs, expanded access to education, healthcare, and childcare options, and many other immeasurable opportunities.

### ✓ The Vote Has Already Been Tallied – People Choose Cars

The truth is that the people have already voted, and they have voted overwhelmingly in favor of their private automobile. In Arizona, more than 99% of people choose to drive – not take transit, ride their bikes, or walk, despite billions in investments the last two decades to ensure people have those options if they want it. Commuters around the world sit in rush hour congestion, and they choose to do it day after day because the net benefit of their vehicle has outweighed any of the costs. We might not appreciate as we conduct our monotonous daily tasks with ease in our private cars – sitting in rush hour traffic, dropping kids off at school, picking up groceries - but our automobiles have vastly expanded our horizons and have been an overwhelmingly net positive for human wellbeing and flourishing. And we must protect them.

# SAY NO TO VMT, SUPPORT THE FREEDOM TO MOVE ACT!

Efforts to Track, Tax, or Limit our VMT are an attack on our values and way of life. That's why it's critical to support our Freedom to Move!

## JOIN OUR GRASSROOTS!



GET INVOLVED!

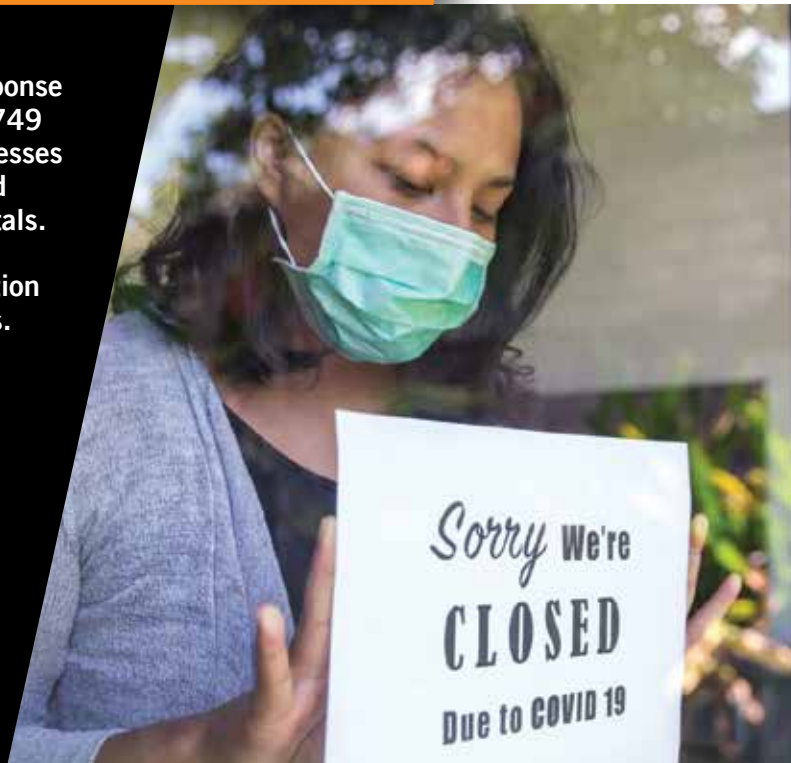
THE PROBLEM:

# Abuse of Emergency Powers Declarations



In Arizona, the “state of emergency” declaration in response to COVID was not terminated until March 30th 2022, 749 days after it was first declared. During that time, businesses were closed, students were required to wear masks, and people were prevented from seeing loved ones in hospitals.

Many lawmakers wanted to end the emergency declaration much sooner, but quickly discovered several roadblocks. If they wanted to end the emergency outside of regular session, lawmakers required the signature of 2/3 of the legislators to call a special session. And if the legislature was called into session, they were powerless at stopping local governments and Charter cities like Tucson or Phoenix from declaring their own state of emergency if the statewide emergency was terminated. It was quickly determined that without significant emergency powers reform, our freedoms and liberties will remain under threat from overreaching government.



## States Need to Restrict Emergency Powers, and That is What HCR2039 Will Do!

Earlier this year, Justice Gorsuch wrote, “Since March 2020, we may have experienced the greatest intrusion on civil liberties in the peacetime history of this country” and “it is hard not to wonder, too, whether state legislatures might profitably reexamine the proper scope of emergency executive powers at the state level.” Thankfully, that is exactly what our legislature did in passing HCR2039, allowing the people to amend the constitution to ensure no future “emergency” declaration is without end and without a proper check from the legislature.

## SUPPORT HCR2039 To Limit Emergency Powers

If passed by the voters in 2024, HCR2039 would constitutionally limit emergency powers of the Governor and provide the legislature with the authority to roll back any emergency declared in the state. HCR2039 would:

- ✓ **Require automatic termination of an emergency declaration by a Governor 30 days after it is declared.**
- ✓ **Empower the legislature to call itself into a special session immediately after an emergency declaration by a Governor with just one third of the body.**
- ✓ **Allow the legislature to alter, limit or roll back an emergency declaration at any time after it is declared.**

# WHY WE SHOULD SUPPORT HCR2039:

## ✓ HCR2039 Restricts Existing Emergency Powers, it Does Not Confer Any New Powers

Some believe that all emergency statutes are unconstitutional in the first place, because they are not enumerated in the state constitution. That's not true, because states have inherent police powers, including for the protection of public health and safety. That is why existing emergency powers statutes in Arizona have largely been upheld by the courts. Whether the Arizona constitution makes mention of "emergency powers" or not, the legislature has the authority to prescribe the powers and duties of the Governor, including the ability to respond to emergencies. In other words, all powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution nor prohibited by it to the states under the 10th Amendment, are reserved to the states.

## ✓ Emergency Powers are Not Unlimited

Real emergencies do exist. Floods destroy bridges. Fires burn down homes. These require swift, executive response. But they are temporary and must be treated as such. Additionally, emergency powers are not without limits and must be consistent with the laws and constitution of the state.

For example, state of emergencies suspending our free speech or 2nd Amendment rights would not be constitutional under current law or with HCR2039 in effect. However, if voters approve HCR2039, future emergency declarations could now be quickly rescinded by the legislature, rather than waiting for a legal challenge that may take weeks, months or even years to resolve.

## ✓ HCR2039 Is Supported by Conservatives & Opposed by the Radical Left

This pro liberty ballot measure was supported unanimously by conservative lawmakers and has the support of freedom minded groups including the Arizona Free Enterprise Club, Goldwater Institute, Republican Liberty Caucus of Arizona, EZAZ, Heritage Action, and America First Policy Institute. Conversely, it was unanimously opposed by liberal legislators and by pro-lockdown organizations including the Arizona Public Health Association, Civic Engagement Beyond Voting, National Organization for Women, the Sierra Club, and Arizona Center for Economic Progress.

### HCR2039 is Supported by:

ARIZONA  
free enterprise  
CLUB

G GOLDWATER  
INSTITUTE

REPUBLICAN  
LIBERTY  
CAUCUS  
of Arizona



HERITAGE  
ACTION  
FOR AMERICA

AFPI  
AMERICA FIRST POLICY INSTITUTE



## BEFORE THE NEXT "EMERGENCY"



It's imperative that Arizonans enshrine a strong constitutional limit on the Governor's emergency powers.

LEARN MORE



# THE TRUTH ABOUT ESG

Heritage Action For America

## What is ESG?

**ESG is short for environmental, social, governance—and the term ESG can be applied in several ways:**

1. Advocates on the Left commonly describe ESG as criteria for making strategic investment decisions to aid environmental or social causes one cares about.
2. Financial firms now promote ESG-driven investment strategies, where they grade companies based on their ESG policies and make investment decisions based on how high a company's ESG score is.
3. Federal and state governments have begun passing laws and regulations mandating ESG reporting from companies.

ESG is a political tool used by progressives to advance Leftist ideology in businesses and financial institutions. From requiring NASDAQ-listed companies to appoint board members based on race and sex, to requiring greenhouse gas emissions to be reported, ESG is destroying our free market and threatens both American interests and our cultural fabric of freedom, choice and liberty.

ESG policies are a thinly veiled attempt to radically transform corporations into social justice warriors. Pro-ESG businesses support the Left's "woke" culture war to redefine gender, promote critical race theory, and cancel conservatives.

Traditionally, it's been the role of business to create a meaningful return for investors. In the process of generating profits, they create jobs, develop innovative new products, and provide needed services.

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But companies that adopt ESG policies risk failing Americans who have invested their savings in the company and hurting Americans by moving our society into dangerous dependence on foreign oil, creating social credit scores, and demanding investment decisions based on pro-abortion policies.

## Who does ESG hurt?

Everyone suffers – customers, employees, employers, and investors.



Under ESG, traditional American energy like oil and gas is punished as part of the Left's climate alarmism. Customers pay higher prices and receive inferior goods and services as companies become more focused on "social justice" than meeting the customer's needs.

Employees are subjected to critical race theory trainings and deal with "woke" gender-identity theory from the boardroom down to the factory floor. This woke culture spreads, creating divisive schools and an unhealthy society for our children.

Employers who aren't supportive of ESG receive low ESG credit scores, which will be used by the Left to justify boycotts. Over time, these social credit scores could lead to businesses being financially cut off—losing access to loans, banking services, or even stock exchanges.



As businesses suffer and underperform, investors will lose out on profits and gains. This affects every American saving for retirement with stocks in a 401k or pension. Millions of state employees and individuals in the private sector will be negatively impacted.

## ESG hurts everyone.



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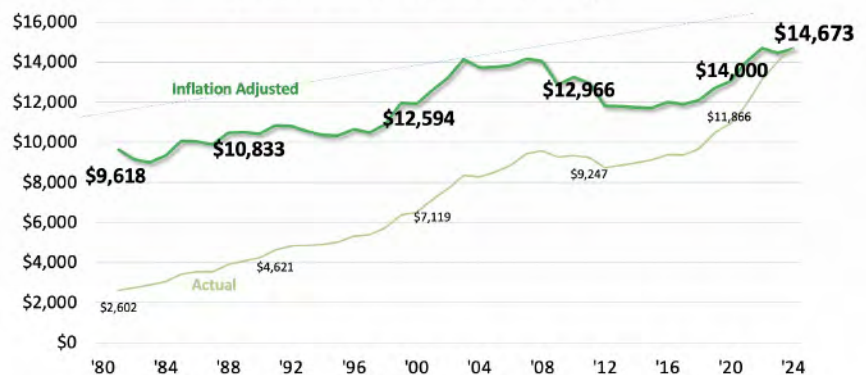
# Record-Breaking \$15K Per-Kid Spending in AZ Public Schools - Amid ESA Growth

by MATT BEIENBURG

August 16, 2023

Arizona's public schools are set to break the record for spending this year, nearing a whopping \$15,000 per pupil, as they also receive \$800 million more in state and local taxpayer funding compared to last year.

**Total Arizona K-12 Funding Per Public School Pupil**  
(Actual & Inflation Adjusted: 1980-2024)



**Chart 1 Source:** Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Joint Legislative Budget Committee All Funding Reports for FY 2001 – 2024. Adjusted for inflation using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI figures, in constant 2023 dollars.

This funding surge, which comes as demand for Arizona's universal Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program continues to grow, should be a shock to naysayers who claimed that ESAs would decimate funding for public schools.

Turns out, that couldn't be farther from the truth. In fact, as Chart 1 shows, Arizona public education spending has soared over the past four decades.

This week's news comes from Arizona's nonpartisan Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC), which just released its new estimates this. The majority of this new funding will go to school districts, rather than charter schools, even though enrollment at districts is projected to decline while enrollment at charter schools is growing.

The total funding for K-12 public education in Arizona is now projected to hit \$14,673 per child. That number not only sets a new spending record on Arizona K-12 students, but it also tops the price of college at institutions such as Arizona State University (where resident undergraduate tuition and fees are just \$13,161 this year).

Moreover, the reported per pupil K-12 spending number understates the actual taxpayer cost of traditional public schools, since it's an average of both district and public charter schools, and the latter receive roughly \$2,000 less per pupil than their district peers. Looking only at traditional public district schools, therefore, the per child cost of public education will likely exceed \$15,000.

**In addition, despite the incessant drumbeat of teachers union talking points trying to convince the public otherwise, these new funding levels continue a decades-long trend in spending increases on public education in Arizona. As shown in Chart 1, total funding per pupil for Arizona public schools has ballooned to \$14,673 from just \$2,602 in 1980.**

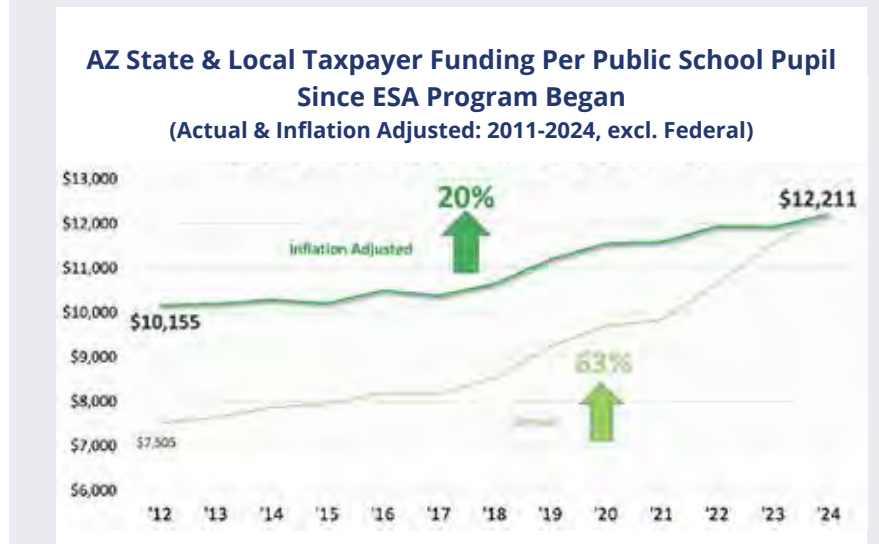
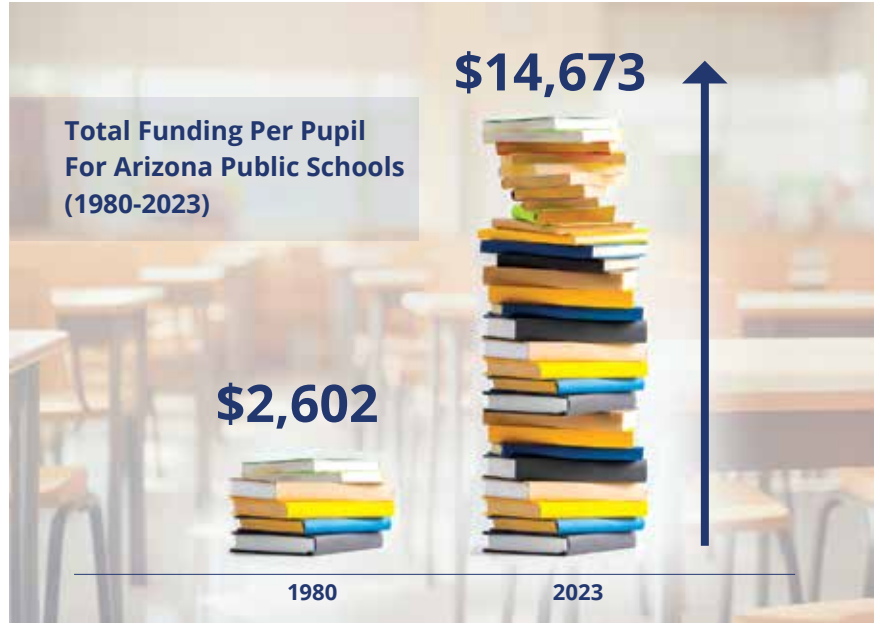
Even when adjusting for inflation, the cost of public education has increased roughly \$5,000 (over 50%) per student from \$9,618 in 1980 to \$14,673 today. That increase translates to an extra \$100,000 spent per class of 20 students each year, on average.

These amounts exclude funding for the state's much lower-cost ESA program, which offers awards of roughly \$7,000 per student joining under the universal expansion.

Moreover, for those interested in funding specifically from state and local taxpayers, Chart 2 captures the steadily increasing spending on public school students in the years since Goldwater helped create the nation's first ESA program in Arizona in the 2011-2012 school year. As with the total funding levels, state and local funding for public schools has increased substantially during the years in which the ESA program has operated, rising over \$2,000 per student (20%) in inflation-adjusted terms since the program began.

Opponents of school choice often speak of funding cuts to public education, but the upward trajectory over the past several decades obliterates this talking point. And while these same opponents will then often pivot to Arizona's relative funding compared to other states, they rarely acknowledge the fact that Arizona—like the United States—already spends significantly more per K-12 student than most other developed countries, or that Arizona's lower cost public charter schools outperform the state's district schools even when adjusting for student demographics, as researchers at Stanford University recently revealed.

Our goal should not be to maximize the cost of public education, but rather to provide the greatest opportunity for academic enrichment to our students, regardless of the schooling environment chosen to deliver it. Arizona remains a leader in this respect, and families across the state will continue to help steward the (growing) resources available to their children.



**Chart 2 Source:** Annual Reports of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; Joint Legislative Budget Committee All Funding Reports for FY 2001 – 2024. Adjusted for inflation using Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI figures, in constant 2023 dollars.



**Matt Beienburg** is the Director of Education Policy at the Goldwater Institute. He also serves as director of the institute's Van Sittert Center for Constitutional Advocacy.



# SAY NO TO CALIFORNIA-STYLE ELECTIONS

Out of state special interests want to upend our election system and disenfranchise voters by importing radical election schemes from California called Jungle Primaries and Ranked Choice Voting (RCV).

## What are Jungle Primaries?

A flawed election system that puts every candidate, regardless of party, on the same ballot. This results in having general elections where candidates from only one political party appear on the general election ballot, giving voters no real choice in selecting a candidate. Whether that is only all Republicans or all Democrats, that's **WRONG** for Arizona!

## Why are Jungle Primaries bad for Arizona?

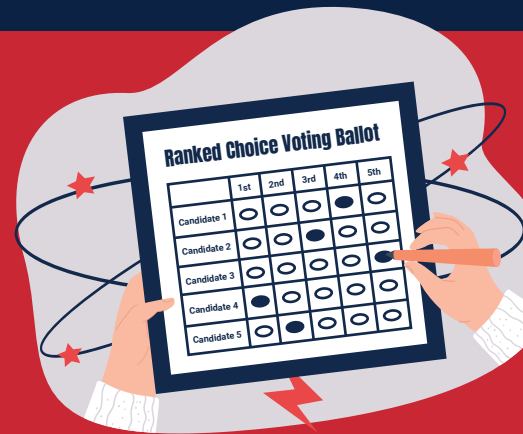
It is a confusing system which results in bizarre outcomes that do not reflect the will of the majority of voters. California currently has Jungle Primaries and they have one of the most dysfunctional political systems in the country!

## What is RCV?

A confusing scheme where voters rank the candidates on a ballot and then votes are tabulated and reallocated until a candidate receives a faux majority.

## Why is RCV bad for Arizona?

RCV undermines the fundamental principle of one person, one vote that determines the winner based on who receives the most votes with a confusing, complicated ranking system that disenfranchises voters, reduces transparency and delays election results.



	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
Candidate 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Candidate 5	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Why California-Style Election Systems are WRONG for Voters:



- Removes choices for voters by allowing only candidates from one party to be represented in a general election.
- Rewards political sabotage by special interests who want to game the system.
- Eliminates the system of one person one vote whereby the candidate that gets the most votes wins.
- Creates a defect known as "Ballot Exhaustion" which allows your vote to be thrown out and not counted.
- Has resulted in the wrong candidate being declared the winner in cities that have used RCV.
- Results in more ballots being rejected due to simple mistakes made while ranking candidates, especially ballots cast by vulnerable voters.
- Will make ballots much more complicated and longer for voters, increasing ballot fatigue.
- Reduces transparency with complicated algorithms that no one understands and are unverifiable.
- Will take longer to vote and delays election results for over a month.
- California-style elections are funded by wealthy, out of state special interest groups who want to change how we vote.

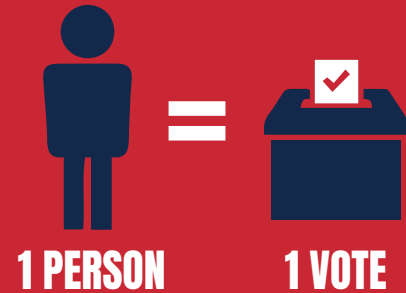
# Independents Benefit from the Party Primary System too:

In Arizona, Independents can vote in partisan primaries, but they can only participate in one party's ballot just like everyone else. Plus, Independent candidates can bypass primaries altogether ensuring a spot on the general election ballot, without the cost of a primary campaign.

Two thirds of voters still choose to associate with a political party, and every election cycle millions are spent courting the "Independent" vote. The answer is not to blow up the primary system that has worked for centuries. This is a "solution" in search of a problem.

# Arizonans tried runoffs before, and quickly rejected them.

From the beginning of elections in the United States, and the beginning of elections in the state of Arizona, we have had a simple system relying on a foundational principle: **1 person, 1 vote.**



## Recently, disgruntled political insiders with desired electoral outcomes have been sweeping the nation with proposals to upend this simple and understood method of selecting our leaders and replace it with complicated, fault-filled ideas like **Jungle Primaries** and **RCV**.

Sold as the solution to all our political woes, in reality it leaves voters confused, delays election results, and leads to thousands of voters being disenfranchised when their ballots are "exhausted" prior to the last "instant run-off."

The push is being brought here to Arizona too, but this isn't the first time an effort has been made to "reform" our elections.

In 1988, after a rare Gubernatorial election with a popular independent candidate resulting in the election of a Governor with just under 40% of the vote, who was subsequently impeached, the legislature

referred to the voters a measure to amend the constitution to require a majority vote to elect candidates to executive offices in Arizona.

The voters approved it, as Prop 105, by a vote of 56.4%-43.6%. Just two years later, the result was the first Gubernatorial runoff election in Arizona history. It was a disaster. So bad in fact, that legislators quickly referred to the voters an amendment to the constitution to undo what they had just done.

It turns out the voters agreed in 1992, approving the repeal of the runoff system, this time by an overwhelming margin of 67%-33%.

## The motivation today is the same as it was in 1988 leaving us with two lessons learned:

**01.** We should not upend our entire election system each time there is a result we aren't happy with. We shouldn't make permanent changes based on temporary outcomes.

**02.** Changing the system does not magically improve the pool of candidates.



[www.protectyourballotaz.com](http://www.protectyourballotaz.com)

# Budget Shortfall Provides Opportunity for Legislature to Right-Size Government Spending



Government spending

After several years of inflated budgets propped up by trillions in unsustainable COVID cash flowing to the states from the federal government, Arizona lawmakers came into the new year and the new legislative session facing a potential shortfall for the budget year in excess of \$800 million. Many of the left have been decrying this to be the result of 1) historic tax cuts enacted by Republicans in 2021 and 2) the successful universal expansion of school choice in 2022.

**This couldn't be further from the truth, and there are 3 key facts that need to be remembered when discussing the state budget and a potential funding gap.**

## 1. The Shortfall is a Fraction of the Arizona Budget, Nothing Like California's Crisis

The projected \$800 million shortfall represents less than 5% of the total state budget, which spends \$17.8 billion this year. Far from catastrophic. Compare this to our neighbor California, facing a \$78 billion dollar deficit (nearly four times the size of our entire budget), which represents 22% of their \$308 billion bloated budget – up from less than \$200 billion only four years ago.

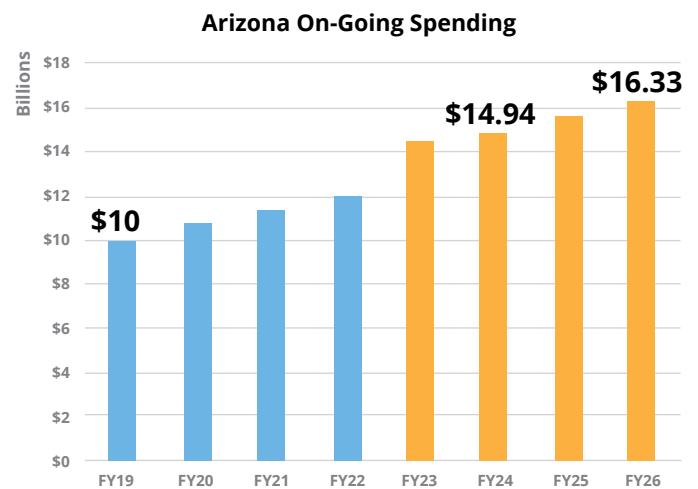
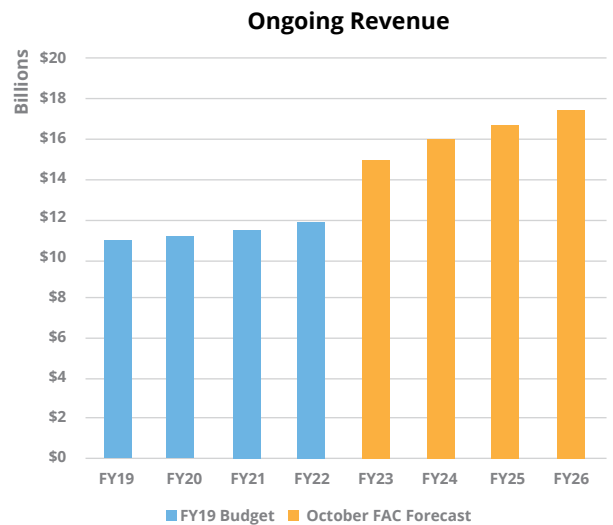
Opposite to our approach, California has continuously increased taxes, having one of the highest income tax burdens in the country. They also don't provide choice to parents and families to make educational decisions themselves. Surely, if Arizona taking less of the people's hard-earned money and providing ESAs to all families is the cause of our small funding gap, California, doing the exact opposite, should place them in tip top shape, right?



## 2. State Revenues Continue to Rise, but Spending Does Too

Contrary to the claims being made by the left, this small budget shortfall is not due to the historic tax cuts passed in 2021 that benefit every Arizonan either. The state is collecting more from taxpayers than it did in 2019, yet the income tax rate has effectively been cut in half. Part of that is due to the taxation of online sales. Initially sold to be an \$85 million hit on taxpayers, it continues to bring in hundreds of millions more. The other more inconvenient reason for the left is the thousands fleeing high tax states like California to relocate themselves, their families, and their businesses here.

This “lack of money in the state coffers” argument is laughable with one quick look at the Ongoing Revenue chart. In summary, lawmakers enacted a budget in 2019 that expected just shy of \$11 billion in ongoing revenue. In their best assessment, they expected that to grow to nearly \$12 billion by FY22 (blue). But what we have experienced since then (orange) is exponential revenue growth – growth that is still continuing today. In fact, the most recent estimate from the nonpartisan Joint Legislative Budget Committee (JLBC) staff is still close to \$18 billion in state revenue by 2026. We do not have a revenue problem, and we never did. Rather, we have had a spending problem for years.



Source: JLBC FY2020 Appropriations Report & JLBC October Budget Forecast

## 3. School Choice Not to Blame, and Government Schools Are at Record Levels of Funding

Unsurprisingly, the teachers’ unions, Democrats, and media continue their scare tactics, arguing that the massive increase in families taking advantage of their right to send their kids to the schools of their choice, is bankrupting the state and government schools. It’s no surprise that neither are true.

As the Goldwater Institute has made clear, increased use of ESAs does not take from district schools. In fact, district schools are receiving \$14,673 per student, an amount never reached before, which has required the legislature to override the constitutional spending limit not once, not twice, but three times, allowing schools to spend billions in excess of the cap.

That ESAs are to blame for the shortfall is also easily debunked by simply looking at JLBC’s presentation to the Finance Advisory Committee in October. In the budget approved by the legislature and the Governor, ESA expenditures were projected to be \$625 million. The actual amount is \$665 million, not very far off at all. In other words, the projections made by lawmakers in July were accurate and fully budgeted for.

### Budgeting Guidelines to Avoid Fiscal Failures

The big picture is that states across the country are seeing slowdowns in revenue growth and potential shortfalls, especially in personal income tax collections. That includes states that have reduced rates (like us), and those that have hiked theirs (like California). But unlike many of those high tax states, Arizona is in a good position.

As long as the legislature: 1) doesn’t allow Hobbs to use any budget gimmicks like rollovers, 2) doesn’t touch the rainy-day fund, and 3) uses this as an opportunity to right size government spending, we will be just fine.

The good news is that based on the Senate Majority Plan released in December, they are committed to doing just this.





ARIZONA  
**free enterprise**  
CLUB

The Arizona Free Enterprise Club takes a principled, aggressive stand in support of our issues and policies. Unlike other organizations in Arizona, the Arizona Free Enterprise Club is not afraid to stand up to powerful politicians and special interest groups that want to maintain the status quo.



The Arizona Liberty Network is the largest coalition of experts and advocates in Arizona working alongside one another towards the same goal; keeping Arizonans free. We do this by providing education on issues Arizonans are facing using one another's comparative advantages, being strategic and through coalition collaboration.