

The Arizona Legislative Alert [UUJAZ](#) / [VUU](#)

Giving Voice to UU Values in Arizona

What to Expect in the 2019 AZ Legislature:

Economic Justice & Human Rights

A Special Issue of the AZ Legislative Alert

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<http://files.vuu.org/uujaz/2018/alert-122318a.pdf>

This is the third in a series of reports from the AZ Legislative Alert that provides background information on topics that likely will come before the Arizona Legislature in 2019. The first was on [education](#), the second on [voting and elections](#) and this one briefly covers a host of issues related generally to economic justice and human rights. Merry Christmas, Happy holidays, wishing you a good new year! We'll be back with more AZ Legislative Alerts after January 1.

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Tax breaks / tax credits – The Governor has pledged to reduce taxes every year (and he has, no matter what), and has pledged to try to eliminate the Arizona income tax, which would put the state into a dire situation. Arizona now has 37 different tax credits for individuals and 22 for corporations. **What's the difference between a tax deduction and a tax credit?** With a deduction you take the amount off your income. Suppose you have a tax deduction of 1,000 for a charitable cause. Since AZ income is, at the very top bracket, 4.59%, you avoid paying \$45.90. With a tax credit, if you gave to a qualifying organization, you avoid paying \$1,000! A

tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in your tax bill! Progressives need to take a long look at whether to continue supporting and participating in tax credits even when these are for an undeniably worthy cause such as public schools and nonprofits that serve low income people. The problem with tax credits? Under the deceptively simple slogan, “taxpayer’s choice,” millions of dollars are siphoned off to various worthy causes, but this takes money out of the general fund and enables Legislators to claim that there “just isn’t enough money” to adequately fund public education and public services for children, mental health, those in need and others. It enables government to “outsource” its responsibility and lends credence to the notion that charities and the private sector should provide these services, not government. On the other hand, there are schools and nonprofits that now depend on tax credits to support their services! A cynical type of legislation that offers taxpayers a Hobbsian choice. Think about it.

Health Care / KidsCare – Arizona’s CHIP program (Children’s Health Insurance Program, called KidsCare) was almost ended, but the Federal Government reauthorized its program in early 2018 for six years, through Sept. 30, 2023. The law ensures that the federal government will cover 100% of the cost at least until September 30, 2019. At that point, Arizona law says that the state will eliminate the program. Legislation was introduced in 2018 that would modify the state law to say that if the Federal contribution drops below 100%, the state will determine whether there are funds to continue KidsCare or not. In Arizona, KidsCare currently covers more than 23,000 children who otherwise would not have health insurance. The 2018 bill, HB2127, passed the House but was not heard in the Senate. This bill needs to be reintroduced and passed. KidsCare covers children in families with incomes too high for Medicaid, up to \$49,000 for a family of four.

Criminal Justice Reform (support). 2018 was a good year in some respects for criminal justice reform, but there is still much work to do that would reduce Arizona’s incarceration rates, provide more assistance during incarceration for education and other services and provide more re-entry assistance to provide a

true “second chance,” thereby reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Increases in the budget for the Department of Corrections and any expansion of private prisons are not needed in Arizona! Also, if legislation is introduced that expands crimes or penalties, these need close scrutiny. Thus, the AZ Legislative Alert will especially watch for (and support) bills that promote diversion from incarceration, provide drug treatment, eliminate transfer of children to adult courts, de-criminalize acts related to mental illness or homelessness or children’s acts, and restore voting rights to persons who have finished their sentences.

The Arizona Justice Alliance is a good place to get updated information on criminal justice priorities. <http://arizonajusticealliance.com/>

Payday Loans (oppose). New versions of “payday” loans continue to be introduced. These are being introduced under new names, such as “consumer line of credit,” but they have the same kinds of rules: people borrow, then have to borrow again, and the interest ends up so high they are paying two or three times the amount of the loan within a year or so. In 2018, the Legislature passed HB2434 that specifically allows unlicensed financial services and products to be offered and to “test” these new “products.” These might include some innovative, entrepreneurial “products,” but it also opens the door to more ideas for loaning money at excessively high pay-back rates.

Welfare / Safety Net (support compassion). Each year the Legislature introduces bills that stiffen the requirements for TANF or SNAP (temporary assistance for needy families), and food stamps, such as requiring photo IDs on SNAP EBD cards, which would be enormously expensive (estimated at \$8.4 million per year), far more than whatever fraud it is attempting to prevent.

Women’s Rights. Some religious conservative groups almost always are able to get bills into consideration that restrict women’s access to abortion, other family planning services, and defunding of Planned Parenthood. Also, the Equal Rights Amendment will again be introduced in the Legislature but what are its chances of getting a hearing? There’s a forum on it scheduled for January 18 at the capitol – more details to come. Why introduce it? Isn’t that just an exercise in futility? Not really. There have been 37 states that have ratified (only need one more) except that there have been five that recinded or withdrew their ratification and it is not

clear whether a state can do that. It also is not clearly established law that Congress can impose a time limit. Lawsuits / courts will decide these questions but one more state is needed first!

GLBTQ+ rights. In 2019, unfortunately, efforts probably will continue to restrict rights of GLBTQ+ persons, often using “religious freedom” as an excuse. The argument is that businesses should not have to provide services with which they have a “sincerely held religious belief” in disagreement. This contention is made even if the business is a public accommodation business and therefore expected under the law to provide services to everyone – including people of other colors, ethnicities, beliefs, backgrounds, and so on. Nevertheless, the argument continues. Transgender identity is also very much a target this year, too. Nationally, efforts are being made to introduce legislation at the state and local level to mandate that a person’s gender is the one assigned at birth. The AZ Legislative Alert will watch for (and oppose) legislation that would discriminate against transgender people.

Impeach? What’s Going on in Washington D.C.? - The wheels may be coming off entirely now! There is no way to predict what will happen over the next several months of DJT’s reign, except that it will be chaotic and not in the best interests of persons advocating for a more fair, more just, society. Everything at the federal level will need to be watched. You might be interested in knowing that a President can be removed from office through two different legal processes:

- Impeachment. Impeachment is considerably more likely now that Democrats control the U.S. House, but impeachment is only the levying of charges. As long as the Senate is controlled by Republicans, conviction is unlikely, UNLESS the Mueller investigation, or one of the state-level investigations, uncovers incontrovertible evidence that DJT has committed crimes *worthy of removal from office*. One might think that the evidence already is incontrovertible that he has been involved in illegal campaign contributions in the payment of hush money, but other Presidents’ campaigns have been fined for campaign law violations, and it is not clear that DJT has lied “under oath” even about the hush money. It certainly

seems clear that he has violated the emoluments clause of the U.S. Constitution, and there are lawsuits making this claim, working their way through the courts. Impeachment and a subsequent conviction / removal are not likely unless the Democrats retake the Senate in 2020 and there is hope that the U.S. might have a different president after 2020!!

- 25th Amendment. A President can also be removed by using the 25th amendment. What is it? It provides that if the Vice President and a majority of the principal officers of the executive departments (the cabinet) decide that the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office they may transmit to the Congress, a declaration to this effect. Then the Vice President shall assume the duties as Acting President. If the President disputes the declaration, then he resumes the powers and duties of the office. However, if the President resumes the office, the Vice President and majority of the cabinet may transmit within four days to the Congress their written declaration that the President is unable to discharge his/her duties. If so, Congress will vote, within 21 days. It takes a 2/3 votes in each chamber to remove the President. During that 21 days, the VP is Acting President. A President can also declare himself/herself unable to perform and the same process would be used.

Immigration

The Wall. Most of the immigration action is at the federal level, with the Government currently partially shut down over DJT's insistence on \$5 billion to build a wall along the southern border. He does not have enough votes to do this. As of January 3, when Democrats take over the House of Representatives, new legislation will have to be introduced and it is even more unlikely that there would be a majority in the house willing to pay \$5 for a wall that most experts say would not help with border security and is in many ways, immoral. In the Senate, as long as the filibuster still exists, there are not 60 votes to build the wall and there are not a majority of senators who want to change the rules to prohibit filibusters.

Thus, the impass continues. Those who truly believe in Democracy know that sometimes you lose. When you lose the vote, over and over again, it is time to recognize that you lost. It is that time for DJT and his wall.

DACA. Deferred action for childhood arrivals is still unresolved, also at the federal level. Even though DACA recipients have won numerous court battles, their exemption from deportation stems from an executive order by President Obama, and it is this executive order that DJT attempts to overturn.

At the state level – there may (or may not) be repressive legislation introduced in efforts to speed up deportation of undocumented people, prohibit / punishment sanctuary efforts, restrict non profits and charities from helping refugees, prohibit cities from issuing municipal IDs, and other legislation that makes life difficult for persons from other countries.

There are several very active pro-immigrant advocacy groups in Arizona, especially Puente, puenteaz.org

Racial Justice

It is difficult to find explicit legislation in Arizona that targets minority populations by name. Instead, laws that negatively impact minority people need to be carefully scrutinized, especially funding for education, job programs, social services, criminal penalties, and education.

Guns – Arizona gun laws are already so lax it is hard to imagine how to give gun owners more flexibility! Yet, bills probably will be introduced to that effect. And, gun control laws will be introduced, too, but may not even be heard.

If you want to keep yourself better informed about proposed gun legislation in Arizona, check out Gun Violence Prevention Arizona <https://www.facebook.com/gvparizona/GunViolencePreventionArizona>

Environment and Water policy – The big issues in Arizona will include what to do about the water issues that are subject to an on-going effort to reach an agreement that will be part of the three-state plan to protect water flow in case Lake Mead reaches historic low levels at the end of 2019 and draconian water reduction has to take place. Once this agreement is reached, if it is, the Legislature will have to approve it. It is to be expected that there will continue to be extensive activity at the federal level to undo various environmental regulations. In Arizona, there may again be bills designed to weaken the State Parks Board, to include nuclear power in the definition of renewable energy, and to weaken requirements for 100 year sustainability for developments.

The Sierra club of Arizona is a good resource to keep track of how Arizona is treating its water supply and other environmental issues

<https://www.sierraclub.org/arizona>

Remember those Confederate Monuments in Arizona – Well, apparently, they are still there! There are two confederate monuments in Arizona that are on public land. Bills will undoubtedly be introduced to remove these (to a museum) but it will be interesting to see if the Republican leadership will let them be heard and whether anyone will take responsibility for removing these.

- One is at Wesley Bolin Park across from the Capitol. It was established in 1961 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to honor Confederate soldiers. It reads "A nation that forgets its past has no future."
- The second is a marker honoring Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, that is located on Highway 60, east of Apache Junction and apparently "names" that part of the highway the Jefferson Davis Memorial Highway. A petition was taken to the Arizona Board of Historical and Geographic Names in 2017, but there was much confusion as to whether this marker actually names the highway or not, and the Board says that the Legislature has to authorize removal of the monument. Rep. Reginald

Bolding (D LD27) has taken a huge petition in 2018 to the Governor asking him to remove these monuments (to a museum).

Mark Your Calendar

January 6. The Legislature is Coming! The Legislature is Coming! Advocacy Training – sponsored by League of Women Voters. Sunday, January 6, Scottsdale Congregational Church. 1-3:30. Scottsdale Congregational Church Fellowship Hall 4425 N. Granite Reef Scottsdale, AZ 85251.

This workshop will cover the basics, from the inside out:

- Part 1. Legislative Sausage -- Why do we get the kind of public policy we have (Dr. Anne L. Schneider) including the way it REALLY works in Arizona;
- Part II. Computer power—How to Use Request to Speak and Track Legislation you are especially interested in.
- Part III. Here's What I've Learned. Kim MacEachern, former lobbyist. How to talk to your legislator; how things work from the inside. AND a bonus from Kim and Anne: What to expect in the 2019 Legislative Session.

Register Now!

Environment Advocacy Training – Workshops sponsored by the Sierra Club will cover the basics on the Arizona Legislature and executive branch of government, and Dos and Don'ts of Advocacy at the Legislature. The workshops will also briefly cover some of the expectations for the 2019 legislative session.

Tuesday, January 15, 2019, 6 PM – 8 PM [738 N 5th Ave, Tucson](#) [RSVP](#)

January 19. Anniversary of the Women's March. Check these sites for sites and plans in Arizona:

- <https://azresist.org/event/official-womens-march-phoenix-2019/> or
- <https://www.facebook.com/events/1074015086088388/> Saturday, Jan. 19 10 to 2. AZ State Capitol.

February 18 (Monday). UUJAZ “Day at the Legislature!” President’s Day. All day event sponsored by Unitarian Universalist Justice Advocacy Network.

Want to subscribe to the *Arizona Legislative Alert*? The AZ Legislative Alert is published weekly during the session to alert progressive, social justice advocates, to legislation that they may want to support or oppose. When the Legislature is not in session, it is published sporadically!

You can sign up by sending an email to legislativeadvocacy@vuu.org. It is written and published by Anne L. Schneider, Ph.D. retired political science professor and former Dean of ASU’s College of Public Programs.

[Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation](#) –

Senior Minister, Rev. Dr. Andy Burnette; Music Minister, Rev. Kellie Walker; Director of Faith Formation, Marci Beaudoin. Administrator, Sue Ringler. Located: 6400 W. Del Rio Drive, Chandler, AZ 480 899 4249 www.vuu.org
For previous copies of the *Arizona Legislative Alert*, and for all weeks (so far) of the 50 Week Action Plan go to <https://www.vuu.org/legislative-advocacy>. VUU holds services twice on Sunday, one at 9:15 and the second at 11:30 In between are a wide variety of adult and children’s workshops and discussion groups. You are welcome here.

[Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network](#) -- Executive Director Rev. Lisa McDaniel-Hutchings; Policy Coordinator, Anne L. Schneider. Board Members, UUJAZ: Sharon Travis, Liz Swan (Chair), Rev. Matthew Crary, Bobbi Bollinger; Rev. Terry Sims, Molly Divine, and Katie Phares www.uujaz.org.