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Initiatives & Referenda, 2020

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Prepared by Anne L. Schneider, PH.D. All opinions are those of the author.

November 8, 2019

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Here is a quick rundown of several initiatives and referenda for which sponsors are seeking enough signatures to get them on the ballot in 2020. These are organized into topics that readers might be interested in (just click on the link, or get the PDF so the link will work, or scroll down for details).

More initiatives and referenda will be filed later. All signatures have to be in by July 2, 2020. Constitutional amendments require 356,467 signatures, Initiatives (to pass a new law) require 237,645 and Referendum (to pass or “veto” a Legislative act) requires 118,823.

Quick Overview

Democracy / Voting - There are four proposals so far, and all would strengthen democratic processes in Arizona. One new one has been filed that should get a lot of attention, it is the “fair elections act” that provides for a wide range of reforms to strengthen voting rights, ensure access, limit campaign expenditures, and protect initiatives and referenda. AND, it is led by the indefatigable Rivko Knox! Another is led by former Attorney General Terry Goddard, “Outlaw Dirty Money,” that almost made it last time.

Economic Justice / Safety Net / Taxation -There are three filed so far. Two are more of an injustice than justice! One of these would remove government protections (probably including interest rates and regulation of inter-personal gun sales). Another would do away with property tax for people over 65, greatly reducing local funds for education! There’s no means test on this proposal – it is mainly a “cut taxes” initiative. One worth paying attention to, however, would strengthen prohibitions against exorbitantly high interest rates.

Education - Rumors are that Save Our Schools and other supporters of public education may propose an initiative to raise funds through a sales tax. Watch this space to see if they file it! So far, the only initiative related to education is another effort to muzzle teachers.

Environment - Three have been filed so far, and each appears to be pro-environmental. One would reduce pesticide use especially that which impacts bees; one would ban “fracking,” and one would somehow modify federal legislation that traded Oak Flat to a mining company.

Health – Only one has been filed so far, and its intent is to strengthen health care protections. This is the Stop Surprise Billing and Protect Patients Act. This Act prohibits insurers from discriminating based on preexisting conditions; bans out-of-network bills, and amends the “surprise bill” dispute process.

Marijuana / Drug Use - There are four different proposals – some constitutional amendments and some statutory changes – to legalize recreational use of marijuana and other drugs. The most expansive is one that would legalize all drug use; the most limited is the “smart and safe” proposal. Not at all clear how all of these, if any, could get enough signatures!

- **Recall petitions have been filed against Greg Stanton (Democrat), Phoenix and Debbie Lesko (Republican) West/North Phoenix. Neither is likely to get the signatures needed and even if they did, the AZ Capitol Times reports that neither of these candidates agreed to a stipulation regarding recall that might be necessary to recall them!**
<https://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2019/11/06/after-impeachment-inquiry-vote-lesko-stanton-face-longshot-recall-efforts/>

All are currently in the “signature-gathering” stage and most have positions for volunteers to help circulate petitions or make donations. You can get updated information on these and others that will be filed later at the AZ Secretary of State site: <https://apps.arizona.vote/info/IRR/2020-general-election/18/0>

Democracy and Voting – There are four proposals so far, and all would strengthen democratic processes in Arizona.

Fair Elections Act - This is the omnibus initiative that would protect Arizona citizens’ ability to vote, expand use of early ballots, avoid being disqualified for errors or discrepancies of various kinds, and protect the ability to use initiatives and referenda. It also would strengthen the Clean Elections Program and reduce the amount that can be contributed to candidates for election. Rivko Knox – a long-time advocate for democracy in Arizona is the chair! Arizonans for Fair Elections (AzAN) **Address:** 2239 W Baseline Road Tempe, AZ 85283 **Phone:** (480) 588-6120 james@thetorresfirm.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Rivko Knox, Applicant and Chair Dacey Montoya, Treasurer. [Application and Full Text](#)

Voters' Right to Know- This is better known as “Outlaw Dirty Money” initiative led by former AG Terry Goddard. This amendment would insure the “right to know” the original sources of money spent to influence an election. Contributions of \$5,000 or more have to have the original source disclosed if the campaign for state-wide office is spending more than \$20,000 or for local office more than \$10,000. This constitutional amendment would not limit the amounts that can be contributed, but is written to ensure that every voter can know who is paying! **Phone:** (602) 633-5146 terry@outlawdirtymoney.com

[Application and Full Text](#)

Democracy & Accountability Act -This Act creates a new conflict of interest law prohibiting members of the Legislature from sponsoring or voting on matters in which they or their relatives have a direct and substantial financial interest. It also expands voting access and eases regulations on circular collectors thereby making it easier to pass citizen initiatives and referenda. **Name of Organization:** Arizonans for Accountability **Phone:** (602) 999-5299 info@arizonademocracyact.com **Name of Officer and Title:** David Chavez, Applicant and Chair Daniel Lutz, Treasurer. <https://apps.arizona.vote/info/assets/18/0/BallotMeasures/I-21-2020.pdf>

Automatic Voter Registration Act – This initiative would simply require automatic voting registration at the department of motor vehicles unless a person opts out, instead of the current situation in which persons need to opt in. **Name of Organization:** AZ-VOTERS. **Phone:** (480) 382-0456 robinson@az-voters.com **Name of Officer and Title:** JULIE ROBINSON, Applicant and Chair EMILY KUBIAK, Treasurer. [application and full text](#)

Economic (In) Justice – One of these would remove government protections (probably including interest rates and regulation of inter-personal gun sales) and one would strengthen prohibitions against exorbitantly high interest rates. Another would do away with property tax for people over 65, greatly reducing local funds for education!

Economic Freedom Act – This constitutional amendment would, indeed, provide freedom for individuals to buy and sell to one another with very little governmental interference. It is part of a national movement sponsored by the National Credit Alliance to prohibit what some see as unnecessary government intervention to protect consumers. "This amendment to the Arizona Constitution would prohibit the state and local governments from increasing, limiting, setting, or otherwise regulating the price of goods, services, loans and credit, or the method or timing of payment, in transactions between private parties. There are some exceptions. The Arizona Republic, however, reports that it would remove limits on loan interest rates, would prohibit mandatory increases in minimum wages after 2019.

<https://www.azcentral.com/story/news/politics/elections/2019/10/03/arizona-ballot-proposal-would-end-limits-interest-rates/3835534002/> Probably, it would prohibit any regulation or background checks on gun sales between private individuals including sales at gun shows.

Sponsor: Name of Organization: Arizonans for Financial Freedom (sponsored by National Credit Alliance) **Phone:** (602) 451-4292 ashleymragan@cox.net **Name of Officer and Title:** Nicholas Vullo, Applicant and Chair Ashley Ragan, Treasurer. Overview: [Application and Full Text](#)

Arizona Fair Lending Act - This would cap lending fees, interest, and other charges at an annual rate of 36%, thereby prohibiting the extraordinary high interest rates or fees charged through payday loans, auto titles loans, and other strategies used to circumvent current law. If this and the "Economic Freedom Act" also passed, the latter would prevail because it prohibits such government acts and is a constitutional amendment where this is a statute.

Sponsor Name of Organization: Arizonans for Fair Lending (Our Voice Our Vote Arizona, LUCHA) **Address:** 1241 E Washington St, Suite 103 Phoenix, AZ 85034 **Phone:** (480) 588-6120 james@thetorresfirm.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Cymone Bolding, Applicant and Chair Lee Lang, Treasurer [Application and Full Text](#)

The American Dream Act AZ – This would eliminate property taxes for people over 65. The primary impact would be a substantial reduction in local government funding for all services but especially for education. It would be a constitutional amendment. Supporters are arguing that the elderly are disproportionately poor and living on fixed incomes, hence, they need tax relief. Yet, there is no means test included in this constitutional amendment. **Name of Organization:** Prop 13 Arizona **Address:** 2610 E. Spring Road Phoenix, AZ 85032 **Phone:** (602) 900-6238 americanDreamActAZ@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Lynne Weaver, Applicant and Chair Randy Pullen, Treasurer [Application and Full Text](#)

Education – Rumors are that Save Our Schools and other supporters of public education may propose an initiative to raise funds through a sales tax. Watch this space to see if they file it! So far, the only one related to education is another effort to muzzle teachers.

Arizona Classroom Code of Ethics This measure would severely restrict freedom of speech for teachers including provisions such as allowing teachers to discuss historical matters only if they were more than 50 years old. **INITIATIVE** Petition Serial Number: I-15-2020 July 2, 2020 Signatures Required: 237,645 Sponsor: **Name of Organization:** YES for a Classroom Code of Ethics **Phone:** (480) 318-2812 yes@classroomcodeofethics.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Catherine A. Barrett, Applicant and Chair John Maynard, Treasurer **Overview:**

[Application and Full Text](#)

Environment – All three of these appear to be pro-environmental legislation: one to reduce pesticide use especially that which impacts bees; one to ban “fracking,” and one to somehow modify federal legislation that traded Oak Flat to a mining company.

Protect Arizona Agriculture Act – This act is intended specifically to address the problem of chemicals (pesticides) used in agriculture that reduce the bee population. Bees are the pollinators, and crops cannot grow without pollination. The initiative says that one-third of the food in American depends on bee pollination. **Name of Organization:** Organic Now **Address:** **Phone:** (520) 250-4656 libertyeconomy.us@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Nicolas R. Guillermo, Applicant and Chair Tracy Molina, Treasurer **Overview:** "This act is intended to limit agricultural chemicals that pollute.

[Application and Full Text](#)

Ban Hydraulic Fracturing Within Arizona Act - “Fracking” is the common term used for hydraulic fracturing, which refers to high pressure water being injected into rock to release oil and natural gas. Fracking pollutes the soil and water, uses excessive amounts of water, and has been implicated in Oklahoma becoming the “earthquake” capitol of the world. This initiative would prohibit the use of hydraulic fracturing in Arizona and encourage the use of other alternative energy sources. **Name of Organization:** Representative Initiatives libertyeconomy.us@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Nicolas R. Guillermo, Applicant and Chair Tracy Molina, Treasurer [Application and Full Text](#)

Save Oak Flat Act - Oak Flat is an area of more than 2,000 acres in the Tonto National Forest east of Phoenix. Federal action in a defense bill included a provision (extracted from other federal legislation) enabling this area of land – which is sacred to more than one Indian tribe – to

be traded to a privately owned mining company that intends to mine a one mile area 7,000 feet below the surface resulting in the collapse of the surface and destruction of the area. This provision was introduced separately in the U.S. House and Senate, but did not have majority support and then was inserted into another unrelated bill and passed after an effort to vote on it separately was not allowed. This initiative would challenge the legality of the federal government process in trading this land to a private mining company. Efforts have been made over the years to convince McCain and Flake (then Senators) to oppose and kill this legislation, but those efforts were not effective. **Name of Organization:** Save Oak Flat **AddressPhone:** (520) 250-4656 libertyeconomy.us@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Nicolas R. Guillermo, Applicant and Chair Tracy Molina, Treasurer. [Application and Full Text](#)

Health

Stop Surprise Billing and Protect Patients Act - This Act prohibits insurers from discriminating based on preexisting conditions; bans out-of-network bills, and amends the “surprise bill” dispute process. It also sets new minimum wages for direct care workers at private hospitals by requiring raises of at least five percent for each of four years **Name of Organization:** Arizonans Fed Up with Failing Healthcare (Healthcare Rising AZ) **Phone:** (480) 588-6120 james@thetorresfirm.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Jenny David, Applicant and Chair Suzanne Jimenez, Treasurer. [Application and Full Text](#)

Marijuana / Drug Use – There are four different proposals – some constitutional amendments and some statutory changes – to legalize recreational use of marijuana and other drugs. The most expansive is one that would legalize all drug use; the most limited is the “smart and safe” proposal. Not at all clear how all of these, if any, could get enough signatures!

100% Complete re-legalization of Marijuana & Hashish – This constitutional amendment, if passed, would re-legalize marijuana and hash. It forbids the government from taxing or regulating marijuana. It gives complete, automatic pardons to anyone convicted of a marijuana crime, civilly punishes government employees who violate a persons marijuana rights, forbids the government from discriminating against marijuana users, protects marijuana user's gun and child custody rights and requires the courts to accept cases involving marijuana. **Sponsor:** **Name of Organization:** RAD Final 1 **Address:** 1905 W. Las Palmaritas Dr. #F165 Phoenix, AZ 85021 **Phone:** (480) 779-8735 Relegalize420@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Mickey Jones, Applicant and Chair Travis VandenBrul, Treasurer

100% re-legalization of all drugs including hashish, heroin, cocaine, LSD & peyote - this is also a constitutional amendment filed by the same group that filed the one to re-legalize marijuana. The difference is, this legalizes a whole array of recreational drugs, using the same language as in the one legalizing marijuana and hashish. **Name of Organization:** RAD Final 1 **Address:** 1905 W. Las Palmaritas Dr. #F165 Phoenix, AZ 85021 **Phone:** (480) 779-8735 relegalize420@gmail.com **Name of Officer and Title:** Mickey Jones, Applicant and Chair Travis VandenBrul, Treasurer

Arizona Cannabis Justice Act – This act would decriminalize cannabis possession, consumption, sale, or cultivation for persons 18 years old and over. Cannabis is an umbrella term that includes marijuana, hashish, and hemp. It provides for immediate release and post conviction relief for prior cannabis offenses and/or charges; and establishes a sale tax on retail cannabis sales from which revenue will be allocated to education and AHCCCS; **Name of Organization:** AZ Justice League **Address:** 7047 E. Greenway Pkwy #250 Scottsdale, AZ 85295 **Phone:** (928) 814-2827 info@azjusticeleague.org **Name of Officer and Title:** Nicole Gallegos, Applicant Rick Villalobos, Chair Kevin Henry, Treasurer **Overview:**

Smart and Safe Arizona Act – This act is limited just to the recreational use of marijuana for persons 21 and older. It permits limited possession, transfer, cultivation, and use of marijuana bans smoking in public places; imposes a 16% excise tax on marijuana to fund public safety, community colleges, infrastructure, and public health and community programs; and permits expungement of some marijuana violations; and prescribes penalties for violations."

[Application and Full Text](#) **Smart and Safe Arizona** **Address:** 2303 N. 44th St., Suite 14, Box 1192 Phoenix, AZ 85008 **Phone:** (928) 362-2296 info@smartandsafeaz.com
Name of Officer and Title: Chad Campbell, Applicant and Chair Darryl Tattrie, Treasurer

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INITIATIVE AND A REFERENDUM?

- Initiatives are “initiated” by citizens! An initiative is the method by which voters may propose new laws or amend existing laws by gathering signatures from registered voters to place the issue on the ballot.
- A referendum is triggered by the Legislature when it (a) refers a bill to the voters to decide rather than just passing or killing it, or (b) when it passes a bill people do not like and citizens exercise a “citizen veto” which is to gather signatures to place the bill on the next general election ballot to be passed or vetoed by the voters. Laws passed with the emergency clause cannot be subjected to the citizen veto, nor can laws that fund state agencies, laws increasing state revenues through new or increased taxes, or acts of the Legislature that are not “legislative” in nature.

[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 at 10:30 to 11:30 on Sunday.

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