

YELLOW SHEET REPORT

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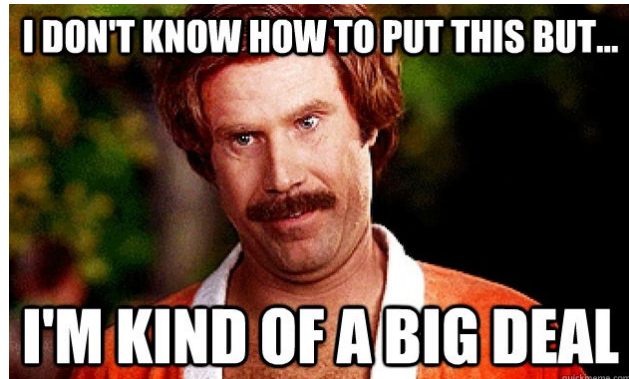
Friday, January 29, 2021

•NEWS NOTES AND GOSSIP•

BUT WHEN THE SESSION ENDS, ALL EYES WILL BE ON HER

Erika Neuberg, the new IRC chair, put a positive spin to the Census Bureau data being delayed two additional months, saying it gives her and the other four commissioners time to fully digest what they are in for over the next year-plus. Neuberg also said she appreciates the Legislature taking over the headlines because it provides the commission some cover to hunker down and get to work without the full media spotlight in the meantime. “There’s a relief that there is so much state news and so much drama that it takes a ton of focus away from the IRC. And now that there’s delays, there’s less

scrutiny, which gives us a little bit of time to kind of get our feet wet,” she said. The IRC is set to meet on Feb 2 and will address the Census delay as well as plans to hire administrative and other potential roles within the commission, but none of those positions are required by statute or the constitution, so Neuberg said she really has no idea what kinds of employees the IRC will hire outside of likely an executive director, mapping consultant and legal team. (Last cycle, there were two legal teams – one for Democrats and the other for Republicans.) She said while the delay offers a reprieve, she’s still not sure what the commission will do first, or what qualities her colleagues will look for in the next executive director, but personally, she wants “somebody of impeccable character, and some experience with how the government works.” That candidate should have strong communication skills and should be “fiercely independent,” she said, adding that she views “fiercely independent” to mean “not easily manipulated” by others. She reiterated what she said in her interview ([YS, 1/21](#)) – that she does not want to be a tie-breaking vote all the time, especially favoring one side of the aisle. To avoid that, she said she would lead in one of two ways – either let the other four commissioners hash things out to come to an agreement before she has to take a side, or she will act immediately to break the tie.



IT' AIN'T THE PARTY OF MCCAIN AND KYL ANYMORE

In a wide-ranging interview with our reporter today, Neuberg acknowledged that she used to be registered as a Republican before becoming an independent in 2016, saying she made the switch because she’s not a partisan and didn’t identify with the Republican Party anymore. She told our reporter that growing up in a deep-red Arizona in the days of Jon Kyl and John McCain shaped her political activity at a young age. “All of my political activity throughout my entire life has been singularly focused on advancing the US-Israel relationship and along those lines, I worked to develop relationships with elected leaders,” she said. “The reality was that most of those relationships were within the Republican Party 20 years ago in Arizona.” She acknowledged that she probably should have changed her registration “a long time ago” as Arizona began to change, but ultimately waited until 2016 – enough time for her to qualify as an independent for the redistricting process. She said it doesn’t mean that she always voted Republican or contributed exclusively to Republican candidates (she has contributed to the campaign of many politicians from both major parties). Ultimately, she said she dropped the Republican label because she felt “it communicated something that wasn’t accurate about me. I am not a party person. I reject identity politics. I focus on policy.”

REMEMBER: HE STOOD WITH STRINGER AND SHOOTER

Former lawmaker Noel Campbell's wife told police he hit her in the face, pushed her to the ground and threatened to "ruin her life" if she told police. According to a police report ([LINK](#)) first obtained by *CopperState News'* Lynne LaMaster (she was the former editor of former Rep David Stringer's newspaper, *Prescott E-News*, and defended Stringer's white nationalism ([LINK](#))), Mary Beth Hrin went to the Prescott police station on Dec 29 with red marks on her face, near her eye and on her neck from where she said Campbell had struck her multiple times. She was obviously scared and initially used a fake name. "The female advised me that she was scared of retaliation from the male, who ... has political power," officer Chad Worthen wrote in his initial report. "I asked the female if by political power she means sitting on the City Council or higher. The female just looked at me and pointed her thumb in the up direction." She told police that she had been cooking for him over the holiday, but he wouldn't eat. When she told him she felt like she didn't have a good Christmas because of it, he became upset and pushed her and she fell to the ground. "Mary Beth then advised me that Campbell struck her multiple times in the neck and multiple times in the face," Worthen wrote. She told police that she warned Campbell that would be "the last time he would assault her" and that she was going to the police. She said he called her "f*cking pathetic." "Mary Beth advised me that Campbell stated to her that he would ruin her life and that the police can't do anything about it," Worthen wrote. In a supplemental report, officer Terry Carroll wrote that when police followed up the next day, Hrin, who identified herself as a former cop and prosecutor, refused to press charges, saying she believes Campbell is in the beginning stages of dementia. Police contacted Campbell at his house. "It should be noted that he appeared to be irritated once he realized we were law enforcement," the report states. Carroll wrote that he contacted the Prescott City Prosecutor's Office, but that it declined to immediately press charges "because we did not have enough information nor cooperation from the victim." Campbell is seeking a vacant seat on the Prescott City Council. Our reporter attempted to call Campbell today, but his old phone number has been disconnected.



IRONY HAS BEEN STABBED TO DEATH, SET ON FIRE AND BURIED

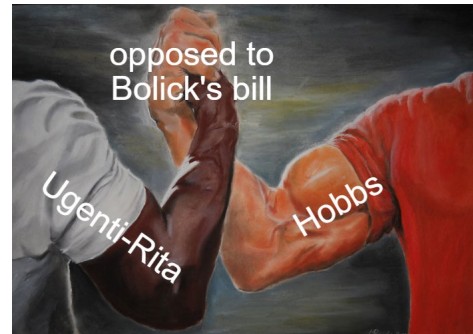


AZGOP Chair Kelli Ward thinks that once an election is over, it's over, and the losers should shut up and move on – but only when it comes to her own election. In an attempt to one-up the irony of problems plaguing the AZGOP election that she (allegedly) won and calls for the audit and recount of that election, Ward today went on James T. Harris' Conservative Circus radio show ([LINK](#)) to officially deny requests for an audit, saying "there is no way to challenge what happened." "There's no procedure, process, rules, that

allow for it to be done," she said. "And you certainly don't allow a challenger who lost an election to demand something that they don't have the right to and we don't have the responsibility for providing. And you especially don't let that challenger who lost the election to determine how it will be done." Of course, that's exactly what Ward has been doing for the last two months, including calling on supporters to be willing to die for their conspiracy. She blamed the Republicans who are talking to "our enemies" in the media, saying they're just trying to take her down.

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

In what one Republican called “the worst bill of the year,” Bolick yesterday filed legislation to allow the Legislature to vote to override the Secretary of State’s certification of electoral votes any day until the inauguration. Obviously, H2720 (ballots; election contests; certificates), which would scrap democracy as we know it, stems from bitterness over Trump losing a free and fair election, and it’s worth noting Bolick’s role with the CEO of ALEC last year over how state legislatures should handle challenging election results they don’t agree with ([LINK](#)). The bill almost certainly isn’t going anywhere, as even Ugenti-Rita has already chimed in on Twitter with what seems like a clear knock on the bill. “Sharpiegate + legislative power grab + eliminating voting options = bad news for Arizona voters,” she tweeted ([LINK](#)) alongside a picture of Alex Kolodin, who filed the Sharpiegate lawsuit, Bolick, who sponsored H2720, and Blackman, who co-sponsored legislation to repeal the PEVL outright. “Each of these issues represent the wrong way to address election integrity, particularly voter confidence in our election system.” (It’s worth noting all three Republicans pictured worked to defeat Ugenti-Rita in the primary – Kolodin ran against her, and Blackman and Bolick endorsed him.) H2720 would also allow any “party to an election contest” to call for a full jury trial to decide a claim, compared to just allowing a judge to throw out a case if it lacks standing or merit, which is what is currently allowed. (Bolick’s husband Clint is an Arizona Supreme Court justice who was part of a bench to deny all Nov 3 election challenges that came their way.) Her bill states, “a court may not grant a motion to dismiss or a motion for summary judgment that would result in dismissal” until after a jury reaches a verdict. And another provision would automatically fire county supervisors and county recorders and bar them from seeking re-election or any other political office for 10 years if there is any disruption to video coverage of counting ballots. The bill has already attracted national media attention, and Bolick, predictably, is blaming the media for blowing things out of proportion. “The mainstream media is using this elections bill as click bait to generate misleading headlines,” she wrote. “It is a good, democratic check and balance.”



THE WHATDEMIC?

After three full weeks of legislative business, Ducey has four bills awaiting his signature, but none have to do with his top priority – the pandemic. Ducey’s communications director CJ Karamargin told our reporter that the Ninth Floor is “not going to legislate ourselves out of this pandemic,” a play on Ducey’s recent comments that we can “vaccinate our way out” of the pandemic. “The legislative session is just getting underway. We’re confident they’re gonna deal with the governor’s agenda,” he said. The Ninth Floor remains focused on managing the pandemic in other ways like the second state-run vaccine center set to open Feb 1. The bills on the governor’s desk are bipartisan, but are wholly unrelated to the pandemic, which nearly every politician has pledged to make a top priority. In fact, according to our reporter’s analysis, 135 pieces of legislation have made it out of committee (out of 1,442 total bills) and none focus on managing the ongoing crisis. The only Covid-related bills to clear committees so far have to do with limiting or overturning Ducey’s executive authority. Among the four bills lawmaker fast-tracked to Ducey’s desk is Udall’s H2023 (schools; employees; employment; discipline), which would close a loophole to discipline non-certified teachers accused of misconduct. (Boyer introduced the same bill last year, but did not make headway before the pandemic shut down the session.) The legislation stemmed from a joint-investigative report *KJZZ* and *Arizona Republic* conducted about the loophole ([LINK](#)). Weninger’s H2045 (civil rights; amendments) would crack down on workplaces discriminating against pregnant women. (It’s also a re-run, which Mesnard and Weninger introduced last year.) “While pregnancy discrimination protections existed at the federal level, Arizona did not have similar protections until this

bill,” Brnovich, who is backing the bill, said in a press release. “This is an important step to help ensure women are not forced to choose between a career and motherhood.” Griffin’s H2036 (electric cooperatives; broadband service; fees), and Dunn’s H2078 (groundwater; waterlogged area exemption; date) are also awaiting the governor’s signature or veto.

·WAKE UP CALL·

GOP bill would allow lawmakers to override electoral votes

Arizona Capitol Times

The chairwoman of the House Ways and Means Committee introduced a bill January 27 that would allow the Legislature to override the secretary of state’s certification of the state’s electoral votes.

Ward, Terán take different ways to lead parties

Arizona Capitol Times

In a state that has turned from red to purple, Arizona’s Republican and Democratic parties continue to push away from the center – one opens the door for more voices to be heard and the other shuts out those who disagree.

Survey: Arizona Democrats more likely to get COVID-19 vaccine

Capitol Media Services

Nearly a month after vaccines have become available here, a quarter of Arizonans remain unwilling to get inoculated against COVID-19.

Arizona lawmakers advance bill targeting gross online food challenges

Capitol Media Services

Doing something gross with food that isn’t yours in hopes of getting social media hits could soon land you behind bars.

Arizona bill seeks to provide patients more information before breast surgery

Capitol Media Services

Women considering breast enhancement surgery in Arizona would get more information about what could go wrong under the terms of legislation given preliminary Senate approval on Thursday.

Pascua Yaqui win water funds, first of \$150 million for Arizona projects

Cronkite News

Pascua Yaqui Council members called it “a blessing.”

Republicans seek audit of Arizona GOP chairwoman election

Associated Press

Arizona Republican Party chairwoman Kelli Ward faces questions about her reelection last Saturday after she spent months promoting unsubstantiated claims of election fraud by former President Donald Trump, officials said.

Gosar denounces violence – but still claims massive election fraud

Payson Roundup

Arizona Rep. Paul Gosar remains at the heart of a growing battle within the Arizona Republican Party over allegations of election fraud, election protests and the effort to purge or censure party members who did not support former President Trump’s claims of election fraud.

State Senator Kelly Townsend Wants to Invalidate Mailed-In Ballots

Phoenix New Times

Another day, another bill pushed by Republican Arizona lawmakers that would restrict early voting in the state.

The Antipope of Mar-a-Lago

Politico

What a medieval religious schism can teach us about Donald Trump’s unprecedented and radically antagonistic approach to the ex-presidency.

Money trail leads from D-Backs to Rep. Andy Biggs to QAnon Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene*Arizona Republic (Opinion, EJ Montini)*

If you've lived in Arizona for any amount of time you'd just assume there was a connection.

It's obvious that Kelli Ward stole the GOP election and no facts can change that, right?*Arizona Republic (Opinion, Laurie Roberts)*

Arizona GOP chairwoman Kelli Ward isn't talking about suspicions calling into question her own election. But if she was, I would have just one question for her.

Rep. Shownna Bolick says your vote for president shouldn't count (but hers should)*Arizona Republic (Opinion, Laurie Roberts)*

While some legislators ponder how to make it more difficult to vote in presidential elections, Rep. Shownna Bolick is proposing that your vote not even count.

Trump should be banned from running again. But that's just not an option*Arizona Republic (Opinion, Robert Robb)*

Trump committed an impeachable offense deserving of a ban on future office. But disqualification independent of removal isn't a constitutional option.

What's Kelli Ward going to do with a #StopTheSteal claim about her own election win?*Arizona Republic (Opinion, Elvia Diaz)*

Can you believe Arizona GOP chairwoman Kelli Ward is now facing questions over her own election win? Ha ha ha ha ha.

Arizona's confusing vaccination website is in line for an upgrade (fingers crossed)*Arizona Republic (Opinion, Editorial Board)*

Arizona is trying to nix confusion online and move COVID-19 vaccine doses where they can be used fastest. Will it pay off? Let's hope so.

Transgender athlete bill isn't a priority now. Why is Kathy Hoffman so worried?*Arizona Republic (Op-ed, Cathi Herrod)*

The proposed Save Women's Sports Act in no way prohibits any student from playing sports. It merely clarifies on what team a student will play. All can play.

·PRESS RELEASES·

Statement from Representative Bolick on HB 2720

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – State Representative Shownna Bolick issued a statement today regarding [HB 2720](#), election reform legislation introduced this week.

“In two months alone, my office has received well over 30,000 emails, letters, and calls pertaining to the November election. Since August of 2020, I have taken potential election reform ideas from constituents and supporters on suggested changes to update current election-related statutes. I have spoken with election observers and poll watchers about securing, adjudicating and auditing ballots.

“House Bill 2720 amends parts of the state’s election law pertaining to ballots, elections, and certificates. During the last election cycle, many individuals showed frustration not knowing exactly how many mail-in ballots were being printed, mailed, on-hand, etc. This bill offers transparency to address some of these issues. And, of course, until today, our office has received countless requests about an audit.

“The mainstream media is using this elections bill as click bait to generate misleading headlines. This bill would give the Arizona Legislature back the power it delegated to certify the electors. It is a good, democratic check and balance.

“At the end of the day, I hope we can all agree we need to have secure elections cast by legal registered voters across Arizona. Our constituents voted us in to restore the integrity of our elections.”

Senator Shope commends settlement reached in Johnson Utilities case

(Phoenix, State Capitol) --- Nearly 70,000 water customers in Florence, Queen Creek and San Tan Valley have a more certain water future, after the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) reached settlements in the Johnson Utilities case. Residents in the area have been dealing with water shortages and overflowing sewers for years. The ACC ordered a removal of management of Johnson Utilities in 2018, and EPCOR USA began serving as interim manager of the utility. In December, regulators approved a sale to EPCOR, and this week a settlement agreement was reached between the ACC, ADEQ and EPCOR to finalize the purchase.

Many of these water customers live in LD-8, and Senator T. J. Shope believes they'll now have safe and reliable water service moving forward. "No one should have to go through what these folks have endured," said Senator Shope. "But this utility nightmare is finally over. The taps will work, and wastewater service will be reliable."

The agreement includes a financial plan for a new wastewater treatment facility, savings to ratepayers for prior equipment purchases, and a compliance plan for drinking water and wastewater facilities.

"We're very pleased to be moving forward with a new chapter for these customers and communities," said EPCOR USA President Joe Gysel. "Leaders like Senator Shope have been an important voice and advocate for their communities and customers throughout this process and we look forward to bringing the service and reliability these customers need and deserve."

Board of Supervisors Responds to Arizona Senate Election Audit Announcement

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors respects the Arizona Senate's decision to hire a company to audit the elections data and documents the Board has provided to date. The Board through its legal team continues to work in good faith with representatives of the Arizona State Senate President Fann.

The Board continues to move forward with the forensic audits of the election tabulation machines approved Wednesday January 27, 2021. The Maricopa County Elections Department plans to hire the two companies that are certified voting system testing laboratories by the U. S. Election Assistance Commission. These are the only companies in our nation that have this certification.

The [Department of Homeland Security](#) designated tabulation equipment as critical Election Infrastructure. If the source code from our tabulation equipment is exposed and posted online, that could jeopardize the integrity of voting systems across the country. Therefore, the County prefers to use these companies.

Senate chooses its own qualified auditing firm to conduct forensic audit of Maricopa County election results

Today Senate President Fann announced that the Arizona State Senate has hired an independent, qualified, forensic auditing firm to analyze 2020 election results in Maricopa County.

President Fann: "There are two primary reasons we have determined the Senate needed to retain its own independent auditing firm. The Senate has consistently called for an auditor certified by the U. S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC). We have now learned the EAC does not certify auditors as such. The other primary reason is that the scope of the audit must be broader than the one proposed by the County's vendors. Our firm will perform everything we have required in the subpoenas. We must bring back confidence that the election results reported are how votes were legally cast. The Senate's forensic audit will bring accuracy and detail to the process, and with that restore integrity to the election process."

Senate Judiciary Chairman Warren Petersen: "Maricopa County has chosen two companies to audit their election. Unfortunately, their limited scope does not fulfill the demand of our subpoena, which called for a deep forensic audit. We need to do more than make basic checks on the machines to make sure they were working. We need to check the ballots and ballot scans for abnormalities. We need to look at the machines to see if there was any manipulation. We need to make sure there was no remote or local access that made changes to the results. I'm grateful the President has chosen a firm that will do that work. Only then will our voters feel confident about the results of the election."

Hernandez Introduces “Breonna Taylor” Bill to Ban No-Knock Warrants

PHOENIX – Representative Alma Hernandez this week introduced Arizona’s version of the “Justice for Breonna Taylor” Law, a bill to disallow police from using no-knock warrants like the officers who killed Taylor inside her Louisville, Kentucky, home during a botched raid last year. After the death of Ms. Breonna Taylor, a bipartisan group of lawmakers at the state and federal level have come together to ban No-Knock Warrants. At the federal level Republican Senator Rand Paul introduced a similar ban at the national level.

Hernandez’ [HB2751](#) would require officers to audibly provide notice to the occupants of a place being searched before executing a warrant. Officers would also be required to provide a copy of the search warrant to the person being searched or the owner of the home or location.

“What happened to Breonna Taylor was a travesty and a miscarriage of justice, and we must do all we can to prevent anything like that from happening here,” said Hernandez, D-Tucson. “This is common-sense law enforcement reform that protects officers and the public from tragic mistakes. We know that this is a non-partisan issue to protect all Arizonans.”

Media Advisory: Superintendent Hoffman to Deliver “State of Education” Address

PHOENIX – Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman will deliver the annual “State of Education” address to the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, February 2nd, at approximately 2pm. She will speak to the hybrid committee virtually, press and the public can view via the livestream.

Live stream available: <https://www.azleg.gov/liveproceedings/> (Select “Senate Education”)

ADHS Continues Refusing to Issue New MMJ Licenses

Arizona Supreme Court has held that all counties must have one dispensary and ADHS must issue licenses whenever it can

Phoenix, January 29, 2021: Yesterday, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) answered a complaint filed in Maricopa County Superior Court alleging that ADHS unlawfully refused the plaintiffs’ applications for a rural medical marijuana dispensary certificate. The companies are controlled by Mason Cave, a board member of the Arizona Cannabis Chamber of Commerce. In its answer, ADHS denies that the Arizona Medical Marijuana Act (AMMA) requires it to ensure that each county has at least one nonprofit medical marijuana dispensary registration certificate.

Judge Mikitish previously ruled against ADHS’ motion to dismiss the complaint, finding that the Arizona Supreme Court’s opinion in *Saguaro Healing LLC v. State* (2020) “requires ADHS to issue certificates and necessarily open the application process once it determines that an individual county does not have a dispensary.” In the case Judge Mikitish referred to, *Saguaro Healing*, the supreme court held that the AMMA “requires that ADHS issue registration certificates, and necessarily open the application process, under two distinct circumstances: (1) if the allocation of dispensary certificates is below the one-in-ten ratio [of dispensaries to pharmacies] or (2) a county does not have a dispensary.”

ADHS admits in its answer and on its website that four counties do not have a dispensary. It also admits in its answer that since at least 2017 there has been less than one dispensary for every ten pharmacies in the state.

Arizona NORML’s Director of Politics and Civic Engagement, Julie Gunnigle, offered the following comment:

“For years, medical marijuana patients believed ADHS was neglecting its obligation to ensure that Arizona has the number of dispensaries required by law. ADHS’ position in this case makes clear that their concerns were valid.

As medical marijuana patients know, Arizona has a critical shortage of dispensaries, leading to both limited choices for patients and artificially high prices. Further, the surging demand for marijuana as a result of recreational sales threatens to exacerbate these problems.

We are disappointed by ADHS’ continued neglect of patients’ needs and its refusal to accept the will of Arizona’s voters as interpreted by the supreme court. Arizona’s medical marijuana statutes are clear, and our supreme court’s interpretation of them is even clearer. Instead of wasting taxpayer dollars by paying legal fees to a corporate law firm, ADHS should comply with its legal obligations and promptly issue new medical marijuana licenses to qualified applicants.”

To schedule an interview with a member of Arizona NORML, contact **Jon Udell**, Communications Director of Arizona NORML. Mr. Udell also represents the plaintiffs in this case, along with his colleague Logan Elia, and his law firm, Rose Law Group pc.

Phone: (480) 258-5597

Email: JonU@arizonanorml.or

Attorney General Brnovich Announces Passage of Pregnancy Discrimination Protections

Bill would add pregnancy discrimination to the Arizona Civil Rights Act, allowing state enforcement

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich, Representative Jeff Weninger, and Senator J.D. Mesnard announced today the passage of legislation that will prohibit pregnancy discrimination in the workplace under the Arizona Civil Rights Act (ACRA). Pregnancy discrimination is illegal in Arizona, but complaints can currently only be investigated by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). If signed by the Governor, pregnancy discrimination will be enforceable under the ACRA and will authorize the Arizona Attorney General's Office (AGO) to investigate and enforce protections for this type of discrimination.

Representative Jeff Weninger and Senator J.D. Mesnard worked with the AGO to introduce HB2045 and SB1180 this legislative session. A bill was also introduced last session, but did not pass both chambers due to the shortened session. On Thursday, both the Arizona House of Representatives and the Arizona Senate passed companion bills with near unanimous support, leaving the Governor's signature as the last step necessary for the bill to become law. If HB2045 is signed by the Governor, Arizona will be the 28th state to enact state laws prohibiting employers from discriminating against pregnant women.

"While pregnancy discrimination protections existed at the federal level, Arizona did not have similar protections until this bill," said Attorney General Brnovich. "This is an important step to help ensure women are not forced to choose between a career and motherhood. I applaud our Civil Rights Division for identifying this gap in state law and working with the legislature to fix it."

The AGO enforces the ACRA which prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, genetic testing, disability, and retaliation. Before the passage of HB2045, when the AGO received a pregnancy discrimination complaint, the AGO had to send the complaint to the EEOC. This additional layer of bureaucracy added unnecessary delays and forced expectant mothers or women who recently gave birth who were discriminated against to risk delayed justice.

"It's time for Arizona to ensure women are protected in the workplace," said Representative Jeff Weninger. "I am proud to work with General Brnovich, Senator Mesnard, and my legislative colleagues to get this bill passed. As a business owner, pregnancy discrimination is not only illegal, but it also hurts women and families."

"When a woman is discriminated against because of her pregnancy, the entire family suffers," said Senator Mesnard. "It undermines what should be a purely celebratory time. As a husband and a new father, it is important to ensure Arizona does not tolerate pregnancy discrimination."

[HB2045](#) stipulates that women affected by pregnancy, childbirth, or other related medical conditions will be treated the same for all employment-related purposes as other employees in their ability to work.

Sierra Bill Aims to Put Youth in Foster Care on Stronger Track for Success

PHOENIX – The statistics surrounding Arizona foster children after they leave state care at age 18 are stark. Fewer than half find employment, only one in 10 attend college and even fewer graduate, one in five become homeless, and far too many experience post-traumatic stress and get into trouble with the law.

Representative Lorenzo Sierra and foster care advocates believe a simple change to Arizona law could help reverse those statistics. On Wednesday Sierra proposed a bill to make it easier for kids to stay in the foster system beyond age 18 until they turn 21, which would put more former foster children on a path for success. If passed, Sierra's [House Bill 2728](#) would automatically allow young people to stay in the foster system until they turn 21, unless they opt out when they turn 18. Currently foster children are expelled from the system at age 18 and have to take steps to opt back in, a decision too few make, Sierra said.

"We've found that so many kids who age out of the foster care system end up homeless or in the correctional system," said Sierra, D-Avondale. "We want to give them a bridge to be able to get into adulthood productively. We hope this bill will give them the extra lifeline they need."

The bill was inspired by the work of Naketa Ross, a certified clinical trauma specialist who grew up in foster care and now serves on the Phoenix Union High School Governing Board. Ross first proposed the change to Arizona law in her December 2020, white paper "From Foster Care to Resilience: Saving Lives by Changing the Foster Care Model" and in the opinion pages of [The Arizona Republic](#).

“We want the structure to remain the same where the youth’s voice is centered, but the approach would be different,” said Ross, who founded the non-profit Resilient Me to help foster youth. “The State would agree to and offer partnership and support to the young adults during this critical development stage. If youth do not want extended assistance they can decline. And if in the future before the age of 21, they change their minds, they could still come back.”

“QUOTE OF THE DAY”

“You certainly don’t allow a challenger who lost an election to demand something that they don’t have the right to and we don’t have the responsibility for providing. And you especially don’t let that challenger who lost the election to determine how it will be done.”

*- Kelli Ward, on the presidential election.
Just kidding, on her own election*