

# BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER ARIZONA

## *Arizona Legislative Democrats*

As we jump into the 2022 Legislative Session, Arizona faces multiple challenges, but also distinct opportunities. Democrats nationally have worked to grow our economy, spurring unprecedented job growth, lowering unemployment, and increasing individual income. While the radical right obstructs progress and roots for failure, Democrats have provided billions of dollars to Arizona to mitigate the ongoing pandemic, help small businesses and working families, expand rural broadband, and fix decaying infrastructure. Because of this, Arizona's state revenues are again soaring.

**As elected leaders, we are committed to use this opportunity to protect and improve public education, and to expand justice, equity, and prosperity for all Arizonans. In the face of a pandemic that is still taking lives and impacting our economy and our most vulnerable communities, our priorities remain clear.**

We are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our entire democratic system of government is at risk as right-wing extremists embrace and spread dangerous conspiracy theories. Reproductive freedoms supported by a vast majority of our nation remain under assault by the radical right and could disappear overnight. Our public schools, already stretched thin from the pandemic, are at a breaking point from years of deliberate underfunding in favor of massive unsustainable tax cuts for the wealthy. Now, without bipartisan legislative action, schools face catastrophic mid-year budget cuts because of an outdated cap on expenditures. And finally, we face the existential threat of rising temperatures, ongoing drought and water shortages. This session is a new chance for legislators to come together, focus on the future, and fight for issues – public health, voting rights, strong schools, clean air and water – that impact the lives of every Arizonan.

# INVESTMENTS THAT MATTER, OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

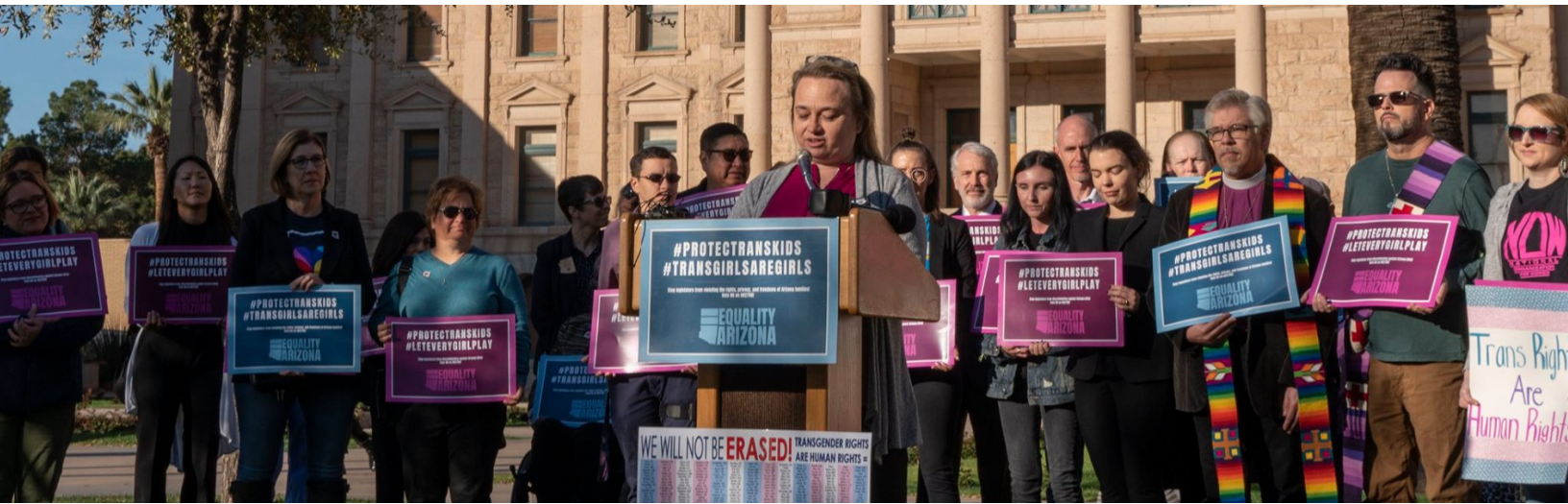
# PRIORITIES

## *For a Better Arizona*

### RISE FROM THE PANDEMIC AND REVITALIZE THE ECONOMY

We must address the COVID-19 pandemic and its ongoing repercussions.

While Governor Doug Ducey has abandoned Arizona to COVID-19, Democrats have not. We are working for every Arizonan, every community, and every business. **We remain committed to doing everything in our power to help Arizonans get vaccinated, be free to work and go to school as safely as possible, and recover economically.** The pandemic has revealed severe cracks in Arizona's foundation and shortcomings in the ability to address statewide emergencies, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Our main goal is to ensure that the remaining share of the American Rescue Plan Act funds go to these communities. More needs to be done to ensure these funds make it to where they belong - which is with the people of Arizona.



**We have the ideas and resources to make a difference. We only need the political will.**



# PRIORITIES

*For a Better Arizona*

## DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND ELECTION INTEGRITY



We expect an intensified right-wing assault against voting rights in the 2022 session. Last session, we stopped several catastrophic bills that would make our democracy less secure, but we must prepare for an even more vigorous assault this session. Instead of finding solutions to uplift Arizonans, right-wing extremists are obsessed with attacking our democracy and pushing voter suppression bills.

**Arizona registered voters have a right to be heard in fair and secure elections without interference or hurdles based on debunked conspiracy theories, the discredited "fraudit," and the Big Lie.**

These tactics are part of a broader, coordinated attack on voting rights and democratic norms happening across the nation. The right is so threatened by progress and convinced that they cannot win fairly, that they actively attack our democracy at all levels. Despite a certified and extensively verified 2020 election, extremists continue to sow distrust as a means to pass additional restrictions on eligible voters, and especially on Arizona's popular and secure early voting system. **We should be making it easier for all eligible Arizonans to vote, not harder.** While we continue to support automatic voter registration and the repeal of needless roadblocks, we know the fight in the upcoming session will be to save democracy itself.

"Worth repeating.  
This GOP  
Karen Fann  
Sham  
Audit has  
**cost**  
**taxpayers**  
**\$2.8Million"**  
-Senator  
Martin Quezada

# PRIORITIES

*For a Better Arizona*

## STRONG SCHOOLS

Every Arizona child deserves a world-class education. Democrats have fought for decades to invest more in education, but right-wing efforts to defund our public schools **have held Arizona near the bottom nationally for per-pupil spending with 20 percent of students having no permanent qualified teacher in their classroom.**

Arizona stays at the very bottom in the nation for teacher pay. We can't develop well-educated children if we don't have well-paid and qualified teachers. Those who educate our next generation shouldn't have to work multiple jobs to care for their own families.

**Democrats support competitive living wages for all Arizona teachers.**

Republicans have put all their energy into undermining voter-approved classroom investments. And now, without an immediate bipartisan resolution to lift an arbitrary cap on education spending set in 1980, **we will not be able to make any further investments to K12 education, and schools will be forced to cut over \$1 billion by April.**

It is sickening that teachers are being laid off when AZ has a budget surplus, Rainy Day funds and billions in federal relief money. **The Gov & majority party at #AZleg are failing to honor the commitment to hold schools harmless** during the pandemic.

-Rep Kelli Butler



Additionally, we must end the partisan, right-wing attacks on teachers and school boards. We strive for a more perfect union, but we can agree it is not perfect yet. We must be able to have an open and honest conversation in the public sphere about racial injustice, and we must be honest and factual about our history in our classrooms. No educator is interested in telling parents how to raise their children, but we can't be so fragile that teachers and school administrators are punished, fined, and fired for discussing the experience of the many cultures that have made our country exceptional.



# PRIORITIES

## *For a Better Arizona*



## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

As the pandemic continues to take a toll on human life, frontline workers, and our hospital system, it only sharpens the need for affordable, quality healthcare for every Arizonan. With our economy growing and revenues soaring, Republicans tripped over themselves to pass \$2 billion in permanent tax cuts for the wealthy while leaving everyone else behind. **Currently Arizona underfunds care for people with disabilities by \$100 million a year and support for families with children born with disabilities by \$14 million a year.** We continue to have one of the nation's highest poverty rates for children. More than 9 percent of our children lack health insurance, nearly twice the national average. We have the resources to make a difference, but Republicans' priorities are elsewhere.

**We can and must fully fund care for people with disabilities, and dental benefits for pregnant women, as well as expand postpartum coverage and KidsCare coverage for working families.** State government must extend paid family leave for all employees, especially as workers continue to spend time taking care of ill loved ones and children during the pandemic.

## PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Arizona has the 8th highest incarceration rate in the country and spends more on corrections than colleges. A majority at the Legislature supports common-sense bipartisan sentencing reforms, which were stopped by the Senate President inches from the finish line.

Democrats are determined to pass alternatives to incarceration for nonviolent offenders and to ease transition back into society.

The epidemic of mass-casualty shootings has impacted Arizona, as well as preventable negligent - discharge shooting deaths. It is long past time for Arizona to close the gun-show loophole that allows prohibited possessors easy access to firearms and to require safe storage to reduce tragedies involving negligent discharge, suicide, or gun theft.

# PRIORITIES

## *For a Better Arizona*

### DEFENDING REPRODUCTIVE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS



Entering our third year of this pandemic there is no doubt that women are bearing the brunt of this ongoing social and economic catastrophe. A report from the Arizona Foundation for Women outlines the devastation Arizona women have suffered during COVID-19. We need to fund critical social safety net programs that Democrats and Arizonans have long supported. The pandemic has further exacerbated Arizona's domestic violence crisis, but as people are forced to shelter with their abusers, we need more services to protect them from abuse. **Democrats support rolling back laws that have eroded reproductive rights, and we support increased healthcare options for women, gender pay equity, and the Equal Rights Amendment.**

**Everybody should have the fundamental freedom to make their own decisions about their bodies and futures**—this is in jeopardy if Roe v. Wade is overturned. Arizona Democrats stand with tens of millions of people around the country who are saying "no more" to attacks on the right to abortion. The courts' hostile stance on abortion access is out of step with Americans who overwhelmingly support keeping abortion legal. The anti-choice, anti-freedom movement is willing to do whatever it takes to advance their ideological agenda of power and control by seeking to roll back Roe v. Wade, criminalize abortion, and control women. Arizona has had an abortion ban on the books for more than a century, and is one of 26 states that are certain or likely to ban all abortions if the Supreme Court overturns Roe v. Wade. Our agenda will level the playing field to make Arizona a stronger and more productive state.



# PRIORITIES

*For a Better Arizona*

## THE WATER AND CLIMATE CRISIS

Finally, **an urgent bipartisan priority must be to secure Arizona's dwindling water supply and tackle the climate crisis.** It is undeniable that we are now experiencing the consequences of climate change and nowhere is that clearer in Arizona than our water levels at Lake Mead which are falling faster than anyone projected. In Arizona, 84 percent of the state is experiencing severe drought conditions and is preparing for additional cuts. We must increase and prioritize funding to conserve water sources for millions of people in the West and in Arizona to buy precious time to develop longer-term solutions.

The climate crisis has brought unprecedented fires, drought, water shortages, and extreme heat. **Without action, the crisis will only get worse.** We know the extreme heat we are experiencing is the direct result of human-driven climate change. Time is running out, and Arizonans need leaders to act on clean energy growth and come together to make job-creating investments to cut pollution, address environmental injustice, and tackle the climate crisis head on. Now is our moment to go big, be bold, and put more people to work.

**Now is our  
moment to go  
big, be bold, and  
put more people  
to work.**





# BLUEPRINT FOR A BETTER ARIZONA

## *Arizona Legislative Democrats*



Despite daunting challenges, Arizona remains a land of opportunity and boundless beauty and potential. Senate and House Democrats remain committed to creating an Arizona that works for everyone. Legislative Democrats are working for all Arizonans, communities, Tribal Nations, and small businesses, and we invite our Republican colleagues to step up and join us.



# INVESTMENTS THAT MATTER, OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL