



# VOTE 2024 TECHSMART



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# VOTE **2024** TECHSMART

**The Vote TechSmart guide is a biennial resource produced by the Arizona Technology Council to provide our members, politicians, friends and stakeholders with a comprehensive overview of Arizona legislative candidates' positions on key issues affecting the technology industry.**

The guide focuses on candidates running for the state House of Representatives and Senate in the 2024 elections. The Council does not make endorsements on statewide or congressional races.

The guide includes endorsements based on each incumbent's past voting records on technology industry issues, along with information collected from a written survey and legislative candidate interviews.

To determine the endorsements, the Council's Public Policy Committee drew from some of its recent legislative outcomes, along with each incumbent's role or position on these bills. Ensuring Arizona continues to grow its business-friendly environment remains one of the Council's top priorities. While the Council supports legislation that furthers Arizona's mission to become the fastest-growing tech hub in the nation, it opposes any bill potentially having a negative economic impact.

The Public Policy Committee interviewed over 40 incumbent and non-incumbent candidates over a five-day period, asking important questions on behalf of the technology industry. The committee carefully selected bills from the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions to determine which legislators showed a commitment to the Council members' industries and issues. Those bills dealt with economic development incentive programs; continuation of the Arizona Commerce Authority; creating a statewide science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM) ecosystem; transportation infrastructure; energy-related policies; and many other topics.

To help you choose among those seeking office in the Arizona Legislature, candidates appearing in the Vote TechSmart guide are listed by legislative district. While you can vote for one Senate candidate and two House of Representatives candidates in each district, the Council only recommends the candidates who support its technology agenda. Therefore, some districts may have fewer or more than three recommendations. If you do not know the elected officials serving your district, you can find them by visiting <https://www.azleg.gov/findmylegislator/>.

If you are not yet registered to vote, visit the Arizona Secretary of State's website at [azsos.gov](https://www.azsos.gov). To stay current on politics and policies affecting the state's technology industry, visit the Council's Policy + Advocacy landing page at: [www.aztechcouncil.org/public-policy](https://www.aztechcouncil.org/public-policy).

Casting your vote in the upcoming election is critical to protecting and advancing Arizona's growing technology sector. As an integral part of the Council, our friends, members and stakeholders understand the role technology plays in the state's economy. It is crucial to convene as one voice to elect candidates who strongly support continued progress of Arizona's technology industry.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 1

**STATE SENATE: Ken Bennett (R)** has proved to be a considerate and pragmatic legislator. He chairs the Senate Education Committee and has shown that he prioritizes Arizona's youth being prepared for the workforce. He has sponsored legislation for the Arizona Technology Council, including SB1183 which was an appropriation for a STEM workforce development program. Bennett is frequently instrumental in stopping legislation that would be detrimental to Arizona's economy and reputation. In 2023 he was awarded the Council's Senator of the Year award.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Selina Bliss (R)** has been thoughtful in her approach to policy considerations during her first term at the Legislature. As a nurse and professor of nursing, she is committed to STEM education and has a passion for strategic investments in Arizona, including workforce development in the medical fields. During her first term she has made efforts to cut regulations and reduce governmental overreach.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Quang Nguyen (R)** showed himself to be a thoughtful legislator during his time at the Legislature. While he is one of the more conservative members, he also understands the importance of key investments in certain sectors of the economy, especially supporting military installations and companies. He supports a lower tax burden for all Arizonans, as well as businesses being free from burdensome regulations, resulting in a strong state economy.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2

**STATE SENATE: Judy Schwiebert (D)** is a former teacher-librarian at Cactus High School in the Peoria Unified School District, where she helped teach students research and technology skills. She has been a strong supporter of investing in public schools, community colleges and workforce development during her tenure in the Legislature. She wants to make sure all students have access to a high-quality public education system providing the opportunity to thrive. She also understands the importance of incentivizing investment and development in Arizona, and supports programs and tax incentives that do so if they have proven results of bringing more dollars and opportunities into the state.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Justin Wilmeth (R)**, the House Commerce chair, has proved to be a pro-business, pro-technology conservative. He has advocated and supported policies that ensure Arizona advances innovation and supports the expansion of companies in Arizona. He is also a huge advocate for trade and has championed securing funding for trade offices with key trading part-

ners for Arizona and ensuring international commerce continues to flow through the state.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Ari Bradshaw (R)** is a fourth-generation Arizonan and a small business owner who believes in pro-business policies that incentivize companies to make Arizona their home. He understands the importance of integrating technology into public schools and supporting STEM education throughout a student's entire educational journey. He is interested in long-term water sustainability and diversifying energy production to support the growth happening in the state.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Stephanie Simacek (D)** is running for the Legislature to have the opportunity to make a difference in her community and to ensure ALL voices are heard. As a former teacher and school board member, her top priority is public education, and she believes that workforce development starts in kindergarten. She wants to work for an economy that will work for everyone and focuses on long-term growth and sustainability.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 3

**STATE SENATE: John Kavanagh (R)** has a proven record of public service as a conservative leader in the Legislature and has held an open door to technology stakeholders across the state. He has helped several significant economic reforms make it across the finish line to make Arizona more competitive, reduce burdensome regulation and incentivize more economic development here with high-paying, 21st-century jobs to ensure the state is a better place to live, do business and raise a family than when he started.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** No endorsement

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 4

**STATE SENATE: Christine Marsh (D)** is running for reelection in the Senate. As a teacher for more than three decades, she is passionate about education and continues to try to find ways to improve education funding overall, and more specifically in key areas like STEM and CTEDs. She also has supported certain economic development programs when the returns on investments result in taxpayers being the winners and the state having more funding for other key priorities. She has worked in a bipartisan manner during her tenure and wants to continue to do so.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Matt Gress (R)** is running for reelection and has worked during his first term to reduce the cost of living and increase teacher

pay. He wants to continue work on advancing policies that prioritize fiscal responsibility, economic growth and the well-being of communities. He understands that a low-tax environment with limited regulations has helped create Arizona's current economic makeup. He supports investments in infrastructure (e.g., roads, water, broadband) and key economic programs that ensure safeguards to benefit Arizona taxpayers. He is a supporter of the Arizona Commerce Authority and understands its pivotal role in bolstering economic development statewide.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Kelli Butler (D)**

previously served as a legislator and currently serves as a member of the Maricopa County Community College District's governing board. She supports efforts to strengthen and prepare the Arizona workforce and sees investing in the public education system as the best way to do so, including greater partnerships with community colleges. With the economic success Arizona has experienced, she supports maintaining incentives that have helped create the right business environment. Additionally, with the growth Arizona is experiencing, she understands water and energy are some of the most complex issues the state is facing and wants to leverage technology to conserve water or develop new, sustainable sources of energy.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 5

**STATE SENATE: Lela Alston (D)** has served the community at the Legislature for many years and her pragmatic and thoughtful approach to legislation has earned her respect from members of both parties. While education and affordable housing have long been her passion and focus, she also has been a strong supporter of initiatives such as STEM and economic development programs that lead to high-quality, high-paying jobs for her constituents. She continuously advocates increased funding of public education and CTEDs to ensure families in her district will have access to more opportunities in the future. She is also a fierce advocate for helping keep families together through kinship fosters when appropriate and works to ensure the resources are there to support those families.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Sarah Liguori (D)** was a welcome addition back to the Legislature after being appointed to fill a vacant seat in February 2024 due to Jennifer Longdon's resignation. She has shown herself to be thoughtful in her approach, focusing on analyzing the facts of legislation. She is a strong advocate for public education, knowing that it is the foundation that gives every child the opportunity for a successful life, regardless of their ZIP codes or circumstances. She understands the importance of providing clean air and quality water to secure a future that works for all Arizonans, including supporting

transitions to clean energy and ensuring we are drawing down all the resources possible through federal programs to support the state in doing so.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Charles Lucking (D)**

is an attorney who was appointed to the Legislature to replace Amish Shah, who resigned to run for Congress. He is a thoughtful legislator who considers all sides of an issue. Arizona's being a leader in technology is something of which he is well aware, as his wife works in advanced technology at Arizona State University. He wants to continue supporting workforce development systems and a business environment that fosters creativity and growth while helping attract businesses to the state. He is a fierce advocate for public education and wants to ensure all communities have access to educational and workforce opportunities.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 6

**State Senate: No endorsement**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Myron Tsosie (D)** is a strong advocate for tribal nations and a strong supporter of both education and economic development. His quiet and measured approach to the Legislature has proved to be thoughtful and shown him to be generally supportive of the Council's agenda.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 7

**State Senate: David Cook (R)** has proved to be a strong advocate for the needs of rural Arizona and wants to take that energy to the Senate. During his time in the House, he has been a supporter of workforce development and education, especially STEM, and important issues such as water. He has been a supporter of key Council priorities and has advocated for more economic development programs and resources focused on rural Arizona, working hard to bring high-quality, high-paying jobs to his district. He is the chair of the International Trade Committee and the Transportation Committee, making him ideally situated to understand the infrastructure needs of the state and their importance to Arizona trade.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Walt Blackman (R)** is a former legislator who during his previous term proved to be willing to fight for those who cannot fight for themselves. He is supportive of policies and initiatives that foster an environment where innovation can flourish, small businesses can thrive and every Arizonan has access to high-paying jobs. He believes that strengthening the economy is crucial for building a state where opportunity is abundant and accessible to all. Preserving natural

resources and ensuring the state remains a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family is why he is running for the House again.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: David Marshall (R)** has been in the House for one term and has shown himself to be a thoughtful legislator. He is a conservative member from Arizona who fights for legislation that gives his constituents more economic development opportunities and ensures that the youth are prepared for available high-quality, high-paying jobs. Marshall sponsored legislation for the Council that would have created a statewide STEM ecosystem that focused on bringing funding to rural Arizona to support government, businesses, constituents and communities for more STEM-focused opportunities, which in turn would bring more high-paying opportunities into his district.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 8

**STATE SENATE: Lauren Kuby (D)** is a former Tempe City Council member who is running for the Legislature to be a voice for science. She will advocate for sustainable water and energy solutions, public education and affordable housing. As a former professor living in the same district as Arizona State University, she understands the importance of innovation and technology and supports investing in the higher education system to ensure companies have qualified workers to help meet their workforce needs.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Janeen Connolly (D)** has a lot of experience serving her community throughout her career working on energy-related projects and wants to continue serving her community at the Legislature. She is a strong supporter of education and community colleges, as well as workforce development, including more tech certifications. She wants to ensure students get access to workforce development opportunities at an earlier age. She wants to bring her energy experience to help initiate incremental and responsible steps toward the development of self-generation with equitable buyback programs that support meeting the state's growing energy needs.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 9

**STATE SENATE: Eva Burch (D)** has proved during her first term to be a leader who has a passion for ensuring her constituents have access to opportunities. That includes economic development and workforce opportunities, as well as patients having access to the health care they need at the most affordable prices possible—something she is a passionate about as a nurse practitioner. She takes a pragmatic approach to legislation and is will-

ing to work with all legislators, regardless of their party, to get things done for Arizonans.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Seth Blattman (D)** is a small business owner who understands the importance of sustainable economic growth and a stable business environment that allows companies to thrive. He believes in the need to enhance the quality of public education Arizonans receive, ensuring all students have access to educational opportunities, and implement infrastructure that can support the growing technology industry. His background in running his family's manufacturing business helps him understand the importance of programs that propel innovation if done fairly and equitably.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 10

**STATE SENATE: No endorsement.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Matt Greer (R)** is a sixth-generation Arizonan who served in the Army and wants to continue his service as a member of the Legislature. Wanting to ensure youth are preparing for the ever-expanding technology jobs in the state, he supports STEM education and offering computer science education in elementary school. He is impressed by the partnership that Intel has with one of the high schools in his district and wants to ensure students have different paths to be prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. He also supports incentive programs that encourage economic development and business development to help ensure businesses and citizens have the opportunity to thrive.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 11

**STATE SENATE: Catherine Miranda (D)** is a former teacher, principal, school administrator and school board member, and a strong supporter of K-12 education. Her top priority is ensuring that Arizona children are prepared for the workforce and higher education. She was instrumental in helping with the passage of a proven economic development program that supports cities' ability to attract large manufacturing facilities, bringing more high-paying jobs to the state. She has also championed bringing awareness to the issue that individuals need access to affordable child care and housing to ensure employees can support their families.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Junelle Cavero (D)** is a lifelong community advocate and small business owner who was appointed in April 2024 due to Marcelino Quiñonez's resignation. She will be a strong advocate for policies that promote economic growth, improve education, protect the environment and enhance the overall

well-being of Arizona communities to work towards creating a brighter future. She will promote policies that help to solidify the state's technology and advanced manufacturing industries, including tax incentives and grants for R&D and startups, alongside targeted workforce development through partnerships with educational institutions and infrastructure investments.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 12

**STATE SENATE:** No endorsement.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** **Anastasia "Stacey" Travers (D)** understands the importance of investing in, innovating and growing opportunities that cultivate a strong, diverse, equitable and statewide workforce to build a strong Arizona economy. She sees the technology industry as a large driver of the state's economic success and champions broadband access so Arizonans have access to remote working capabilities in order to continue companies' competitiveness and economic growth. As a mother, she also sees the importance of making sure Arizona's youth have access to an educational system that helps prepare them for the jobs of the future and wants to continue advocating Arizona's public schools.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 13

**STATE SENATE:** **JD Mesnard (R)** has always taken a measured approach to legislation. He has been a strong advocate for CTE programs to ensure Arizona's schools are preparing students for workforce needs. He supports reducing the size of government and a simplified tax code over more targeted tax incentives. He sponsored legislation reducing the corporate income tax to ensure Arizona remains attractive for business retention and attraction. He also commonly works with stakeholders to find solutions for controversial issues and has an open door policy to talk through issues.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** **Jeff Weninger (R)** is a former legislator who has significantly advanced the technology agenda in this state during his tenure. His experience and passion for business, technology and innovation will be a great addition to have back. He works to keep regulation out of the way of innovation and supports policies that result in economic development that bring high-quality, high-paying jobs to not only his constituents but all Arizonans. He previously championed many priorities of the Council and works hard to ensure politics doesn't come before policy.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** **Julie Willoughby (R)** was appointed to the Legislature in 2023 to replace Liz

Harris. She is an emergency room trauma nurse who brings that quick thinking and detail-oriented decision making to the Legislature to serve her community. One of the first votes she faced after her appointment was supporting the continuation of the transportation infrastructure initiative, which will help enable Arizona's ability to meet the demands of commerce and international trade needs. She understands the needs of small businesses and ensuring their importance to the state's economy to ensure they are able to grow and develop within their communities.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 14

**STATE SENATE:** No endorsements.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** **Laurin Hendrix (R)** is a small business owner who returned to the Legislature after serving previously from 2009 to 2011. As a small business owner, he understands the importance of a strong education system, solid and growing infrastructure, and a tax and regulatory environment that supports a strong economy for businesses to start and succeed here. He previously served on the Maricopa County Community College District governing board and the Gilbert City Council, which helps him better understand the needs of his community and the businesses located there.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 15

**STATE SENATE:** No endorsements.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:** **Neal Carter (R)** is an attorney committed to ensuring investment in the state's infrastructure needs to support the companies already here and those Arizona is attracting. He supports collaboration with community colleges and other innovative solutions for the increasing workforce needs of the technology industry, including ensuring Arizona's K-12 system has STEM programs available to their students. He also strives to ensure Arizona has a low tax burden to allow citizens to thrive while still investing in the state's core responsibilities.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 16

**STATE SENATE:** **TJ Shope (R)** has long been a champion of technology issues, especially when they bring jobs to rural Arizona. He has proved to be a level-headed leader who is willing to put in the effort to continue improving the business environment for Arizona and works across the aisle to get his initiatives accomplished. He is a strong advocate for education and health care. He brings his

family business principles to the Legislature and has been instrumental in getting the state to invest in the transportation infrastructure needs to support Arizona's commerce.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Teresa Martinez (R)** is a conservative member who values economic development and is a fierce advocate for the necessary infrastructure to support businesses and their commerce needs. She values collaboration of stakeholders to ensure the state's needs are met in a thoughtful manner and address the concerns of those impacted. She is passionate about serving her community, protecting local businesses, developing the economy in the face of inflation, and helping to bring jobs to the district and the state.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 17

**STATE SENATE: Vince Leach (R)** is a former senator who has a thoughtful approach to how he legislates. During his time at the Legislature, he worked to protect taxpayers and ensure Arizona has a business landscape ripe for economic development. Although not a fan of many targeted tax incentives, he is always open to listening and has been a supporter of the business community through overall reduction in business taxes and putting money back in taxpayer pockets. He wants to bring civility back to the Legislature and focus on long-term planning to ensure that Arizona is prepared for future fluctuations in the economy.

**STATE SENATE: John McLean (D)** is a small business owner from Tucson who has a technology background and a thorough understanding of aerospace and defense issues and the role his district plays for the state in those issues. His top priorities including supporting public schools and securing Arizona's water future. He supports continuing investments in R&D, including economic development programs to attract new business in green energy, biotech and advanced manufacturing.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Kevin Volk (D)** was born and raised in Tucson and understands the importance of gathering the experts to come up with solutions that are right for his district and Arizonans. He is a data-driven decision-maker and understands how technology and innovation can be used to address many of the issues facing Arizona, including water and energy. He will look at the return on investment of any economic development program to ensure that the state is a winner in the end. Being a former schoolteacher, ensuring access to educational opportunities for all students is important to him.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 18

**STATE SENATE: Priya Sundareshan (D)** was born and raised in Tucson and is running for reelection to the Senate to make Arizona a leader in renewable energy, balance water resources through conservation and efficiency, and fully fund public schools. During her first term she has proved to be a staunch defender of voting rights, as well as an advocate for renewable energy and smart water policy. She brings her engineering degree from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and law and natural resources economics degrees from The University of Arizona to the Legislature and approaches issues with a science-based decision-making style.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Nancy Gutierrez (D)** is the current House democratic whip and a strong supporter of public education in Arizona, bringing her experience as a teacher to her advocacy at the Legislature. She understands the importance of CTEDs in preparing Arizona's students for the workforce needs of today and tomorrow, including ensuring students have access to STEM and STEAM programs. When looking at economic development programs, she works to ensure a balance exists for meeting the needs of the state's long-term goals. With Arizona's diverse population, she works to honor and serve all the people of the state.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 19

**STATE SENATE: David Gowan (R)** has proved to be a champion of the business community during his tenure as a legislator. He has always been an advocate for a balanced budget complete with the needed incentives to attract and retain both businesses and their needed workforce. He has been instrumental in extending key economic development tools essential to the growth of the technology industry and supports lowering the tax burden on businesses and reducing red tape that companies may face.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: No endorsement.**

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 20

**STATE SENATE: No endorsement.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Alma Hernandez (D)** has been a champion of the priorities of the technology industry during her time at the Legislature. She is a pragmatic legislator who has proved she works tirelessly to accomplish her legislative priorities, which include antisemitism, health care, education and economic development. She has successfully sponsored several pieces of legislation that benefit her community. She also has

supported policies that result in collaborations between companies and educational institutions, and prioritize investment in infrastructure and policies that result in increased commerce and provide high-quality jobs.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Betty Villegas (D)** was appointed to the Legislature in spring 2023 to replace Andres Cano, who resigned to pursue graduate studies. She is an avid supporter of public education and offers her experience to find innovative solutions to fix the affordable housing crisis. She understands the importance of policies that ensure we are developing, growing and supporting workforce training programs, such as STEM and CTEDs, to ensure Arizona continues being a leader in technology and innovation, as well as access to affordable housing so workers can support their families and we can continue to attract companies here to offer high-quality jobs.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 21

**STATE SENATE: Rosanna Gabaldón (D)** is running for reelection and has shown herself to be a friend of the Council. Her legislative priorities include water sustainability, public education and economic development. She has been supportive of several of the Council's priorities, including developing a STEM ecosystem and economic development programs that help to bring high-quality jobs to her district. She understands the importance of providing the necessary infrastructure to support the economic development.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Stephanie Stahl Hamilton (D)** has served her district since 2020 and believes the best investment that can be made for Arizona's future is to invest in the education of children, including high-quality preschool. She also understands that Arizona must better address the workforce needs by ensuring educational paths are preparing skilled workers who companies require. She is also passionate about the environment, with a mindset for sustainability, and has proved to be a defensive champion of clean energy and water conservation issues during her tenure.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Consuelo Hernandez (D)** is running for reelection, and has a passion for serving her community and credits her parents for teaching her to serve others. She has served on the Sunnyside Unified School District governing board and has mentored and helped at-risk youth in her area, including DACA students. She is a champion of increasing investments in infrastructure, and creating and supporting policies that would help Arizona to become a national clean-tech industry leader. She is committed to restoring funding for education, helping rebuild Arizona's economy by investing in the small

business community, and investing in infrastructure and renewable energy resources.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 22

**STATE SENATE: Eva Diaz (D)** is a lifelong educator who prioritizes effective public education, quality affordable health care and fighting for the families in her community. Ensuring every child gets a quality education is a top priority for her, including families having access to early education so children are set up for success as they enter the education system. Additionally, she has supported policies that help ensure clean air and sustainable water supply are available for the future. She has also been supportive of legislation that enables an environment for the technology industry to flourish.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Lupe Contreras (D)** has been a strong leader in his caucus for many years and is running for reelection. He is currently the Democratic leader in the House and a great advocate for education, business and his community. He works hard to ensure every voice is heard and has long been a supporter of the technology agenda, working to ensure issues are judged based on the merits of the programs instead of just politics. He is also known for taking a balanced approach to protecting Arizona citizens and workers while also encouraging economic development.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 23

**STATE SENATE: Brian Fernandez (D)** is a proven champion of his district who is running for reelection to ensure everyone in his rural community can achieve the American Dream. Having a technology background as a software developer, he understands the industry is essential to Arizona's healthy and thriving economy. He is supportive of more funding for STEM education and community colleges as they are a pathway to addressing the access to talent that Arizona's innovative companies need to be successful. He fights to invest in safe, reliable infrastructure; sustainable water; and renewable energy for all Arizonans.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Michelle Peña (R)** is running for reelection to continue fighting to meet the needs of rural Arizona. She advocates all students having access to a quality education, innovation in agriculture, sustained water conservation initiatives, and enhanced transparency and accountability in health care. She has been a quiet but thoughtful legislator, looking at each issue on the merits and how it impacts her district.



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Mariana Sandoval (D)** is a former school board member running for reelection who prioritizes supporting public schools. She believes a quality public education system is crucial to the attraction and retention of technology companies in Arizona. She is a member of the U.S. International Trade Committee and as such understands the importance of facilitating strong trade relationships for the state.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Matias Rosales (D)** is a San Luis City Council member who wants to take his service of his community to the Legislature. He believes economic growth starts with the K-12 system and wants to bring more educational opportunities to all students, especially those in rural Arizona who have limited access to STEM programs and CTEDs. He understands the importance of economic development programs and how they can help bring high-quality, high-paying jobs to rural communities, and aid the economic success of those communities.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 24

**STATE SENATE: Analise Ortiz (D)** is passionate about serving her community and has done that during her first term in the House. She is running for the open Senate seat and wants to continue her work in giving her constituents access to affordable housing, high-quality education and workforce opportunities. She is a thoughtful legislator who wants to work on reforming the state's education finance formula to ensure no matter where students live in the state that they have access to a high-quality education and different education opportunities to ensure they are ready to succeed in the workforce when they leave the system.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Lydia Hernandez (D)** is running for reelection but also serves on the Cartwright School District governing board and her top priority is supporting public schools. She is also a strong advocate who brings jobs to her district and to the state while recognizing those workers as the backbone for the economy. She is the co-chair of the Arizona Latino Legislative Caucus, advocating to ensure policies passed in the state take into consideration the success of all Arizonans, regardless their background or ZIP code.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 25

**STATE SENATE: Tim Dunn (R)** has shown to be a legislator who understands the balance of rural and urban communities in the overall economic landscape and is now running for the Senate. He is a small business owner and understands the importance of supporting the business

community. He has a passion for economic development and sensible tax policy and has been a supporter of the technology industry's initiatives since he took office. Addressing Arizona's impending water crisis is one of his top priorities to ensure the state's economy can continue to grow and flourish while still protecting the rural way of life.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Michael Carbone (R)** quickly proved to be a rising star in the Legislature his first term as he has been a strong advocate for the technology and business communities while ensuring jurisdictions have the tools necessary to attract and retain businesses to their communities. He understands the importance of high-quality, high-paying jobs and ensuring the pipeline of workers are being developed in the state's education system to meet those workforce needs. He advocates for long-term plans to meet Arizona's infrastructure, transportation and water challenges to keep up with the growth.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Nick Kupper (R)** has served his country for 20 years in the U.S. Air Force and feels called to continue serving his community at the Legislature. As a father and veteran, he wants to ensure all families have the ability to access a high-quality education and opportunities for economic success. As a self-proclaimed "tech nerd," he understands the role innovation can play in meeting the state's water, energy and infrastructure challenges. He supports economic development programs that truly incentivize the behaviors beneficial to the state and have the right return on investment for all Arizonans.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 26

**STATE SENATE: Flavio Bravo (D)** is a born and raised Arizonan who has focused his career on assisting immigrants, particularly DACA students, and is running for reelection to continue to advocate his community. He understands the housing and economic policy challenges the state is facing. He is very supportive of STEM education and increasing the availability of affordable housing so quality teachers are encouraged to stay in Arizona. He is supportive of finding policy solutions to grow workforce opportunities in technology through providing students after-school opportunities and companies the necessary workforce to help Arizona's economy prosper. He has supported programs with proven economic results.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Cesar Aguilar (D)** is a lifelong Arizonan who is running for reelection to continue the public service to which he has dedicated much of his adult life. His top priority is funding public schools – from pre-kindergarten to college – to help give students and

families educational and workforce opportunities. He sponsored legislation to bring CTE opportunities to middle schoolers. He is also a strong advocate for solutions to the affordable housing supply shortage to make sure families have the basic needs and tools for upward mobility and success. He has supported the Council's legislative priorities.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 27

**STATE SENATE: Kevin Payne (R)** has proved to be a strong voice for small business during his time in the House and now wants to take that experience to the Senate. As a small business owner, he understands what industry needs from government and, more importantly, what they do not need. He has worked to reduce burdensome regulations and has a history of supporting the Council's technology agenda. He has been a great advocate for his community and offers a thoughtful approach to each legislative proposal. As the chairman of the Military Affairs and Public Safety Committee, he works tirelessly to support first responders and advocates investment in transportation and communication infrastructure.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Tony Rivero (R)** has previously served in the Legislature, as well as was a Peoria City Council member. He was a strong supporter of Arizona establishing international relations and trade during his previous time at the Legislature and we expect that to continue. He is a strong advocate for giving Arizona's youth educational and workforce opportunities early to expose them to the different paths available to them. He has been a supporter of the economic development programs that helped make Arizona a technology hub.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 28

**STATE SENATE: Frank Carroll (R)** takes an innovative approach to crafting legislation and has sponsored measures to address workforce development issues in Arizona. He shows a real understanding of the technology community and its impact on economic development. He takes his time to look at the entire picture before making a decision and has been supportive of the technology agenda. Ensuring Arizona's infrastructure needs are being met has been a top priority as he has advocated key investments and a long-term strategic plan to address Arizona's growth and transportation needs.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: David Livingston (R)** has been a long-time supporter of the technology agenda and has worked to reduce regulations during his tenure

in the Legislature. He also championed the continuation of the Arizona Commerce Authority to ensure Arizona can compete with other states to bring here companies with high-paying jobs. He understands the importance of programs that incentivize the behaviors to not only grow, attract and retain business but also increase the funds in the state's coffers to pay for other key priorities, which is important to him in his role as Appropriations chair.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 29

**STATE SENATE: Janae Shamp (R)** is a legislator who is passionate about ensuring Arizonans have access to appropriate, affordable health care in the state. As a nurse in the operating room, she is used to having to look at the entire picture and making sure to make the decisions to support a successful procedure. She brings that same approach to the Legislature and looks at the long-term goals then implements the steps necessary to get the state there. She supports programs that help Arizona's economic development success and fought against the repeal of the Arizona Commerce Authority because she saw the importance of attracting and retaining companies that bring high-quality, high-paying jobs to the state.

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Steve Montenegro (R)** is a thoughtful, conservative legislator who is always willing to listen. While he prefers to lower the overall tax burden for all Arizonans over targeted incentive programs, he also understands the importance of economic development programs that ensure local jurisdictions have the necessary infrastructure to attract advanced manufacturers or other innovative companies offering high-quality, high-paying jobs. He has worked with nonprofits to help students in underserved communities graduate high school and brings that same goal to the Legislature.

## LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 30

**STATE SENATE: No endorsements.**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: Leo Biasiucci (R)** is a passionate legislator who has shown strong leadership as the current House Republican whip. He has a strong record of support for the technology agenda and programs that help to bring economic opportunity to the state, especially in rural areas. He has been an advocate of ensuring state processes are utilizing technological advancements. He also has been a vocal critic of human trafficking and those abusing Arizona's vulnerable populations.

## Recap of the 2023 Legislative Session

There were several key successes in the 2023 legislative session that helped further advance Arizona as a place where technology companies can thrive. The Council's top legislative priority was Rep. Michael Carbone's HB 2809, which increased the aggregate cap from \$100 million to \$200 million on the payments to local jurisdictions to reimburse the cost of public infrastructure improvements for the benefit of a manufacturing facility. This bill was important for Arizona's maintaining the ability to attract manufacturing to the state since the original cap was met with all the existing projects in the pipeline. Other economic development-related bills supported and taken into consideration were the extension of the Office of Economic Opportunity with HB 2209, the reduction of the small business taxable income with SB 1260, and the expansion of the Research and Development tax credit with SB 1562, which ultimately didn't pass.

Another top priority of the Council's was to ensure Maricopa County voters would have the opportunity to extend the transportation excise tax to support the region's transportation needs. Sen. Frank Carroll sponsored SB 1102 to give Maricopa County permission to ask the voters to extend the sales tax, which is set to expire in 2025. Maricopa County is the only county that requires the permission of

the Legislature to send a sales tax question to the voters. The transportation infrastructure in Maricopa County is vital to the ability of our companies to participate in commerce and international trade. The voters in the 2024 general election will decide whether the tax is extended for another 10 years. This measure was the reason for the longest legislative session in the state's history.

The Council also continued its advocacy for clean and renewable energy and worked hard to have legislators kill HB 2411, HB 2440, HB 2618 and SB1502, which all would have had negative impacts on the solar industry in Arizona. The Council supported HB 2373, which made an automated platform to speed up the permitting process for solar energy devices.

The Council continued to fight for funding for the state's P-20 education system by advocating SB1272, which removes the requirement that funding for 9th grade CTE classes be tied to a list of in-demand regional education. Additionally, the Council supported efforts to increase funding in the K-12 system and funding for the Arizona community colleges and Arizona Promise Program.

The Council had several other policy wins in 2023 session also, but these are a few of the highlights.

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## Recap of the 2024 Legislative Session

The 2024 legislative session dealt with many challenges in progressing the Council's pro-technology agenda, mainly the state facing a \$1.3 billion budget deficit over two years. The top priority of the legislative session was the continuation of the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA). This included fighting the efforts to repeal and consolidate the agency, as well as repeal the key economic development programs that the Council has supported or even had included in Arizona statutes, like the Angel Investment tax credit. While the session had not concluded as we prepared this document, we

have been able to successfully defeat the efforts to repeal the ACA and its programs and fully anticipate the continuation to be done during the final budget negotiations with some additional oversight or reporting.

Throughout the session, the Council stayed true to its original priorities, which included looking for opportunities to support economic development programs that have proven to work for the state; consistently, equitably and sustainably funding the state's P-20 education system; seeking opportuni-

ties to positively impact the diversity, equity and inclusion of Arizona’s workforce and leadership; advancing energy policy that prioritizes clean and renewable energy use; and looking for opportunities to expand Arizona’s STEM education.

The Council continued to advocate career and technical education and STEM education to ensure Arizona’s technology companies have a pipeline of trained talent to meet the various levels of employees they need. This included educating legislators and other education stakeholders on the importance of computer science being offered in every high school to ensure every student has the opportunity to learn the required skills for the workforce needs of our technology companies. However, with the state deficit, we did not run legislation to require this because it would have been an unfunded mandate on schools. Additionally, SB1113 adult education; program schools; revisions was signed by Gov. Katie Hobbs to update continuing high school and workforce training program statutes.

Clean energy and air quality were other large priorities of the session, which included stopping several legislative proposals that were introduced. Some of the bills we were able to help defeat were HB 2130 that would have required counties to come up with maximum acreage policies for renewable energy production, HB 2133 that established a surcharge on solar panels to establish a Solar Panel Disposal Fund, and SB1010 and SCR 1002 that would have negative impacts on business programs to help reduce emissions and results in credits to allow manufacturing.

The Council had several other policy wins in 2024 focused on the Arizona Space Commission, Arizona-Ireland Trade Commission, continuation of the Department of Homeland Security, Pluto becoming the state planet (a lighthearted bill since Pluto was discovered in Arizona) and defeating legislation that would have negatively impacted technology in the areas of artificial intelligence and working internationally.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELP MAKE IT HAPPEN

The success of the Council’s agenda could not be accomplished without the support of the legislators who are willing to fight to advance the priorities that have helped Arizona’s business and technology environment thrive. While we usually grade incumbent legislators based on their vote records over the previous two years, a large number of members did not have the opportunity to vote on several key initiatives due to the unprecedented number of resignations and appointments. Therefore, this year we are not grading the incumbents but instead giving special recognition to those incumbents who have been champions of the technology industry and the Council’s priorities.

While several of those members are highlighted in the endorsement process above, there are several who are not running for reelection – at least not at the Legislature – who deserve some special recognition and a show of appreciation. While we do not always agree on everything, these members fought to advance the Council’s agenda during their tenure.

*Below are some of those key legislators who deserve a special thanks:*

**Sen. Lela Alston**

**Sen. Ken Bennett**

**Sen. Flavio Bravo**

**Sen. Eva Burch**

**Sen. Frank Carroll**

**Sen. Brian Fernandez**

**Sen. David Gowan**

**Sen. Anna Hernandez**

**Sen. Steve Kaiser**

**Sen. Sine Kerr**

**Sen. Catherine Miranda**

**Sen. Janae Shamp**

**Sen. TJ Shope**

**Rep. Seth Blattman**

**Rep. Michael Carbone**

**Rep. Lupe Contreras**

**Rep. David Cook**

**Rep. Alma Hernandez**

**Rep. Consuelo Hernandez**

**Rep. David Livingston**

**Rep. David Marshall**

**Rep. Jennifer Pawlik**

**Rep. Marcelino Quinonez**

**Rep. Laura Terech**

**Speaker Ben Toma**

**Rep. Justin Wilmeth**

**Rep. Michelle Udall**

## In Conclusion

We thank the Arizona Technology Council's Public Policy Committee, whose members helped to vet legislative candidates and develop the content for the 2024 Vote TechSmart guide. For questions regarding this guide or the Council's work, please contact Council President + CEO **Steven G. Zylstra** by phone at (480) 353-9277 or email at [szylstra@aztechcouncil.org](mailto:szylstra@aztechcouncil.org).

As an advocate for technology companies in Arizona, the Council continuously monitors federal, state and local policies that impact the growth of Arizona's technology industry. With the strength of over 750 member companies, the Council informs and educates policymakers on issues that are important to Arizona's technology community.

The Public Policy Committee focuses on issues and initiatives that accelerate technology-related public policy and legislation in Arizona affecting the growth and development of the technology industry. The work of the committee encompasses the four targeted areas of technology commercialization and development, workforce development, supply-chain development and capital formation. The Committee, along with Council staff, works with legislators, elected officials and policymakers at all government levels to educate them on the value and promise of the technology industry. For more information on getting involved with the Council's Public Policy Committee, please email Staff Liaison **Ron Schott** at [rschott@aztechcouncil.org](mailto:rschott@aztechcouncil.org).



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