

AZ LEGISLATURE 101

A Guide to the Arizona Legislature

The Arizona State Legislature plays a critical role in shaping policies that directly impact Arizonans' daily lives.

Here's a look at the Arizona state government, its responsibilities, and its legislative process.

FEDERAL VS. STATE GOVERNMENT: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The federal government oversees national policies and issues, while state governments address more localized concerns. Similar to our federal government, Arizona's state legislature holds authority over areas such as education, transportation, healthcare, and criminal justice at a much more granular and local level. These decisions significantly impact Arizonans' lives and work in conjunction with federal policies and mandates.

For example, federal laws can establish baseline protections against discrimination, but our state legislators can expand upon these protections to address specific community needs. The Arizona legislature could consider measures to include sexual orientation and gender identity in anti-discrimination protections. This is how our state's policies influence civil rights.

HOW DOES THIS AFFECT YOU?

Arizona's legislature makes decisions on critical issues such as funding public schools, setting minimum wage levels, and defining voting laws to name a few. It also directly influences housing policies, environmental regulations, and public health measures. The legislative process in Arizona can also shape human rights by enacting laws that either protect or restrict freedoms.



ARIZONA'S STATE GOVERNMENT AND LEGISLATURE



90 seats in the
Arizona
Legislature

30 Legislative Districts

Each district has one senator and two house members.

30 Senate Seats

60 House Seats

TO QUALIFY AS A LEGISLATOR ONE MUST BE:

- ✓ at least 25 years of age at the time of taking office,
- ✓ resident of the state for the previous three years and a resident of the county for at least one year before election,
- ✓ cannot be employed by the state or any county, city or town.
- ✓ cannot be under guardianship or convicted of a felony, unless their right to vote has been restored.





STATE GOVERNMENT POSITIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS:

1. **Governor:** The state's chief executive, responsible for signing or vetoing bills passed by the legislature, proposing a state budget, and calling special legislative sessions.
2. **Senators and Representatives:** Members of the Arizona State Senate and House of Representatives who draft, debate, and vote on legislation.

ARIZONA'S HOUSE AND SENATE STRUCTURE:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

Size: 60 members

Membership: Two representatives per legislative district

STATE SENATE:

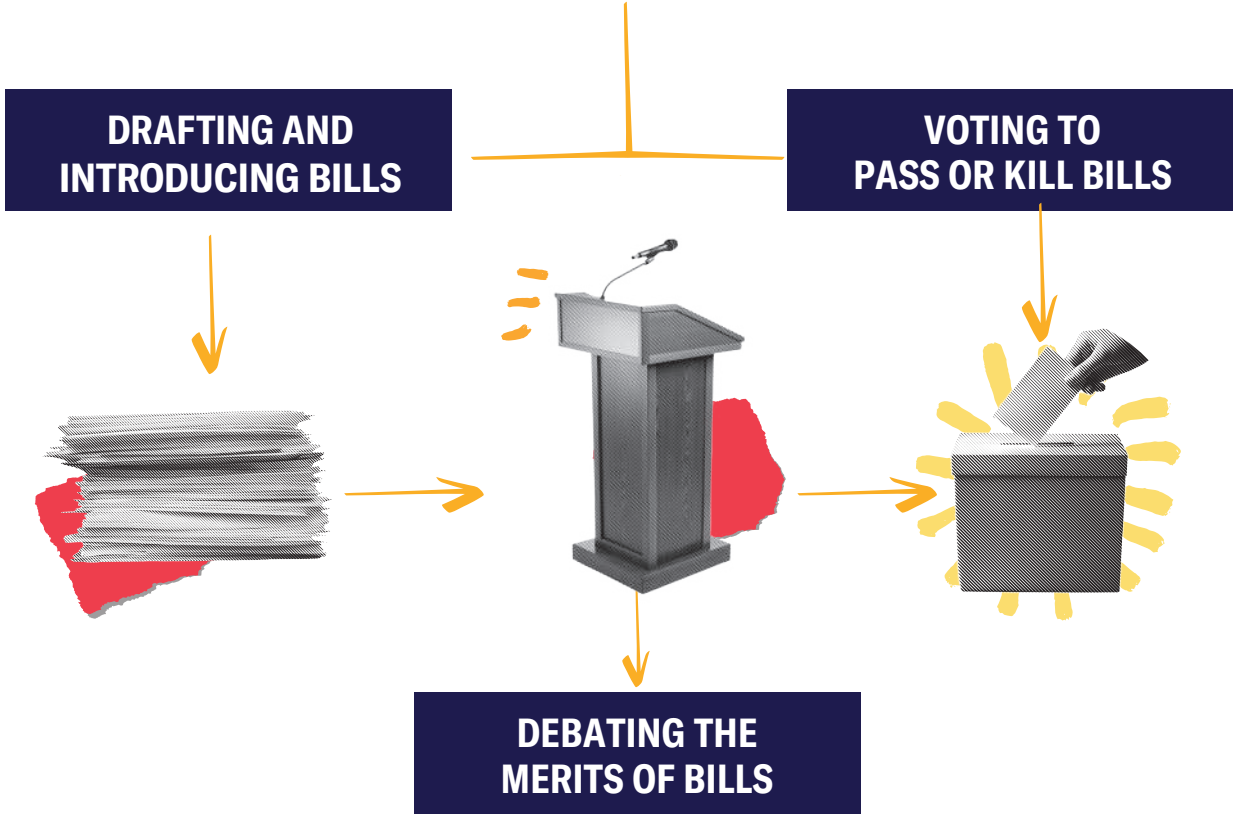
Size: 30 members

Membership: One senator per legislative district

Term Limits: Both senators and representatives can serve up to four consecutive two-year terms (eight years total) in each chamber.



LEGISLATORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:



THE ARIZONA LEGISLATIVE SESSION STARTS ON THE 2ND MONDAY OF JANUARY EVERY YEAR.

The legislature adjourns sine die (i.e., terminates for the year) no later than the Saturday of the week in which the 100th day from the beginning of the regular session falls. The President of the Senate and Speaker of the House may, by rule, extend the session up to seven additional days. Thereafter, the session can only be extended by a majority vote of members present of each house.



COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP

Committees play a crucial role in the legislative process. They review proposed bills, hold public hearings, and make recommendations. Committee leadership is typically determined by the majority party and includes chairpersons and ranking members who set agendas and guide discussions. Examples include:

- Education Committee
- Health and Human Services Committee
- Judiciary Committee

THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The legislative session is the period during which the Arizona legislature meets to propose, debate, and vote on bills.

What Happens During the Session?

- **Bill Introduction:** Legislators submit proposed laws.
- **Committee Review:** Bills are assigned to relevant committees for discussion and refinement.
- **Floor Debates and Votes:** Bills that pass committee reviews move to the full House or Senate for debates and votes.
- **Reconciliation:** If there are differences in House and Senate versions, a conference committee resolves them.
- **Governor's Action:** The governor can sign, veto, or allow the bill to become law without a signature.

SCHEDULE OF IMPORTANT DATES:

January:
Session begins
(second Monday
of the year).

**February-
March:**
Bill hearings in
committees.

April:
Deadline for
passing bills in
the originating
chamber.

May:
Final votes
and budget
approval.

June-July:
Governor
reviews and
signs bills.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

If your legislators don't hear from you, they assume you approve of their actions. This is why it is important to voice your opinions and concerns to your legislators.



ELECTED OFFICIALS

CONSTITUENTS



**FIRST THINGS FIRST,
FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS**

<https://www.azleg.gov/findmylegislator/> →

WAYS TO CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

CALL THEM OR WRITE THEM

- ✓ **TIP 1**
Know your house and senate district and the names of your legislators.
- ✓ **TIP 2**
Plan out what you will say.
- ✓ **TIP 3**
Remember to mention the bill number (if any) and why you are calling or writing.
- ✓ **TIP 4**
Make it short and sweet. Get to your point quickly.
- ✓ **TIP 5**
Tell a personal story they can connect to.
- ✓ **TIP 6**
Problem, solution, action(i.e. "Vote yes on HB xxxx!").



ENGAGE WITH THEM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- ✓ **TIP 1**
Follow and comment on your legislator’s page.
- ✓ **TIP 2**
Ask them where they stand on issues.
- ✓ **TIP 3**
Urge them to support or oppose bills.
- ✓ **TIP 4**
Share our content on social media @acluaz (Twitter),
ACLU of Arizona (Facebook) and tag your legislator.



CONNECT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS EARLY AND OFTEN!



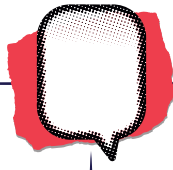
IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY

- ENGAGE WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS ON SOCIAL MEDIA
- WRITE A **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**
- STAY CONNECTED WITH US**
(SUBSCRIBE TO OUR EMAIL LIST & FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA)
- PARTICIPATE IN A PUBLIC MARCH OR PROTEST**

WHY IS SHARING YOUR STORY IMPORTANT?



**PERSONAL STORIES
MAKE AN IMPACT**



**START IMPORTANT
CONVERSATIONS**



**OPEN THE DOOR
TO LASTING CHANGE**