



Governor Hobbs issued her first veto of 2024 this week, rejecting a Republican-backed proposal to criminalize border crossings outside an official port of entry. This was the Governor's 144th veto since she started the job; she is now in second place for the total number of vetoes from any recent Arizona Governor.

House Approves Bills on Voting, Cruising

The House only had one voting floor session this week, giving bipartisan support to bills that ban local governments' limits on cruising, set timeframes for public records responses, require minors to complete a safety course before operating a boat, add regulations for sober living homes, and limit city regulations of accessory dwelling units.

Representative Keith Seaman (D-Casa Grande) joined Republicans to support a bill that allows a property owner with a grandfathered irrigation right to keep a physical availability credit when permanently retiring the land from irrigation use.

House Republicans approved bills that would permit any elected official to inspect all voting equipment and ask voters to prohibit local governments from restricting any devices based on their energy source or consumption.

Senate Approves Changes to Housing, Mental Health Care

In the Senate, legislators split on party lines to approve bills that require universities to post more information about courses and ask voters to create a property tax break for "public nuisances."

There was bipartisan support for other measures – including expanded dental care for adult AHCCCS members, more access to mental health care for people with substance use disorders, and funding for the Arizona Health Innovation Trust Fund and the Arizona Trail Fund. A bipartisan coalition provided enough support to approve bills that would override local zoning policies on housing.

House, Senate Fail Bills on Animal Abuse, Vehicle Miles

Lawmakers failed to pass proposals to increase pharmacists' scope of practice, exempt transportation network companies from liability in some accidents, override some municipal regulations on middle housing, increase disbursements from the Mobile Home Relocation Fund, alter authorities and reporting requirements on services to the homeless, specify authority over community roadways, create an animal abuser registry, and ask voters to ban taxes or fees on vehicle miles traveled.

Committees Approve Pluto, Tamales

Policy committees found bipartisan support this week for bills that continue the Arizona Department of Forestry & Fire Management for eight years, designate Pluto as the official state planet, allow natural organic reduction, permit school employees to administer glucagon in an emergency, and reduce limits on home-cooked foods like tamales.

Other bills advanced on sharp partisan divides – including a ban on voting centers, an option for university students to challenge a grade, a requirement that counties provide a chain of custody record for every ballot, revised definitions of gender in state statute, and a ballot measure that would ask voters to block government contracts with any financial institution that won't work with firearm companies.

What's Next?

The schedule will get busier at the Capitol next week as House members return from their trip to Israel. Policy committees have just two more weeks to consider bills under the current timeline for the legislative session – it's unclear whether legislative leaders will delay that deadline. Hundreds of bills still await a committee hearing, and many others will move to floor votes in the House and Senate soon.

2024 Statistics

Bills Signed:	1
Bills Vetoed:	1
Ballot Referrals:	1

Maybe Next Year

More than half of the 1,759 proposals introduced this year are dead, unless lawmakers resurrect them through procedural steps or strike-everything amendments. Those unsuccessful bills sought to change many public policies, including:

- **Abortion**

As expected, the legislature did not advance bills that would have increased access to abortion or removed limits on medical professionals who perform abortions. A Republican-sponsored effort to require the State Board of Investment to divest from companies that promote abortions for minors is still advancing through the legislature, but the Governor is likely to veto it if it reaches her desk.

- **Animals**

The legislature did not pass bills that sought to create a fine for stealing a pet, ban cosmetic animal testing, and tighten penalties for abandoning animals.

- **Electoral Votes**

An effort to give legislators, rather than voters, the ability to appoint presidential electors drew a lot of attention but was never even assigned to a committee hearing.

- **International Outreach**

Legislators never voted on bills that would have defunded Arizona's trade offices in Germany and Asia, and never considered an effort to create an Arizona-Ireland Trade Commission.

- **Legislative Oversight**

Bills that would have banned conflicts of interest for lawmakers and required drug tests for legislators never received a committee hearing.

- **Real Estate Listings**

The Senate failed to pass a bill that would require real estate listings to include political district details. (The proposal could get another vote, if at least three senators change their mind about opposing it.)

- **Short-Term Rentals**

Lawmakers from both parties introduced almost a dozen proposals on short-term rentals in response to complaints from constituents, but no changes advanced this session. The debate continues outside the Capitol, though: Legislators have asked the Arizona Attorney General to determine whether local ordinances on short-term rentals are legal.

- **Slow Drivers**

A new law to fine drivers who go slow in the left lane appears to be dead due to bipartisan opposition from lawmakers who believe state laws already prohibit it.

- **Vlogging**

The House never heard bills that would have set requirements for parents who include their children in money-making vlogs.

In the Elections

A grand jury wants to talk to Arizona's alternate electors. Runbeck Election Services will allow legislators to audit and monitor election procedures. Election officers want the legislature to fix a requirement that they open their offices the weekend before an election. Arizona's November ballot will be very long.

In the Courts

Both sides found something to celebrate in a recent order that upheld Arizona's citizenship requirement for voting. Kari Lake ended her legal effort to get access to ballot envelopes from the 2022 election. The Maricopa County Recorder's defamation lawsuit is going to trial.

In the News

Governor Hobbs is directing federal funding to reduce medical debt. Arizona has an Extreme Heat Preparedness Plan and hopes to receive additional funding from the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Democrats renewed their push to establish a right to birth control. The legislature is considering changes to Arizona's marijuana laws. The Governor stopped looking for ways to replace the Board of Regents. The Arizona Auditor General has a new report on education funding and classroom resources. Republican lawmakers oppose a citizen's initiative on abortion; Governor Hobbs and legislative Democrats support it. Yuma County responded to lawmakers' complaint about its broadband project. Conversations about groundwater management are getting personal. Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne (R) announced his support for a bill to enhance requirements for Holocaust education in Arizona schools. There's a looming deadline for negotiations about Colorado River water. The Arizona Department of Transportation wants to know what you think about its Five-Year Plan.