

AZPHA

2026 Arizona Ballot Measures

A Public Health Perspective

What voters are deciding in November

The big picture

10 legislative referrals are already on the ballot.

Two citizen initiatives are central to the public-health conversation if they qualify: voting access and ESA accountability.

AzPHA has taken positions on the measures that most directly affect public health and civic health.

Public-health frame

Voting access, school funding, transportation safety, food affordability and civil rights are public health issues.

They shape who has power, where public money goes, and whether communities can make healthier choices.

AzPHA positions at a glance

Vote Yes / Support

Free, Fair and Secure
Elections Act

Protect Education Act

Vote No / Oppose

SCR1004 — Photo
Enforcement

HCR2001 — AZ Secure
Elections Act

HCR2048 — ESA Poison
Pill

No Position (yet)

- HCR2021 grocery taxes
- HCR2055 drug cartels
- SCR1004 vehicle miles
- HCR2003 sports/restrooms
- HCR2007 school spending
- HCR2040 school labor
- HCR2044 anti-DEI

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Priority ballot fights

Where AzPHA has a clear recommendation

Citizen Initiative Free, Fair and Secure Elections Act

Citizen initiative — 2026 qualification/certification track

Would protect voting by mail, early in-person voting and Election Day voting at county voting centers.

Would allow voters to automatically receive a ballot for each election.

Keeps voter-ID requirements and confirms that only eligible U.S. citizens decide elections. Is a constitutional amendment.

Arizona already has strict laws about voting qualification review. This keeps those elements in place.

AzPHA position

Vote Yes

Protect early voting, mail voting and voting centers.

Public-health / practical lens

Arizona voters have relied on early and mail voting for decades. Protecting access helps eligible voters participate in decisions about schools, health care, housing and local services.

HCR2001

AZ Secure Elections Act

Legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Essentially ends mail in voting by requiring on-site government-issued ID validation when casting a ballot, including by mail.

Note: To vote by mail voters already need to prove their eligibility in person. Signature validation occurs for each ballot with questionable or changed signatures going back to the voter for additional validation.

Adds address-confirmation steps *every 2 years* for voters who want mail ballots.

Would change early-voting timelines and procedures.

AzPHA position

Vote No

Avoid new barriers to early and mail voting.

Public-health / practical lens

Voting access is a public-health issue. Extra paperwork and ID steps can fall hardest on older adults, people with disabilities, rural residents and people with limited transportation.

Citizen Initiative Protect Education Act

Citizen initiative — 2026 qualification/certification track

Would add guardrails & accountability to Arizona's 'wild wild west' ESA voucher program.

Limits eligibility to families earning \$150K or less. Adds spending rules, financial transparency, safety standards, background checks & provider oversight. Private & 'micro-schools' would need to test student progress. Homeschool parents would have tighter spending guardrails (e.g. no ski lift tickets, diamond rings or other luxury items, family pianofortes etc.). Better guardrails on disability assessments.

AzPHA position

Vote Yes

Add ESA accountability while preserving appropriate access.

Public-health / practical lens

Education policy is health policy. Safe schools, effective education and responsible use of public resources all support healthier communities. ESAs are soaking up public school funds – especially among wealthy families who were already sending kids to private schools (a large portion of the users).

HCR2048

‘Military Families’; Scholarship Accounts (deceptive name)

Legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Marketed as protecting unused ESA funds for children of military families... but is really just a blatant tool to quash the Protect Education Act.

Protect Education Act sweeps unused funds after the fiscal year for all. If this passes, the Act would be in conflict and HCR2048 and the PEA would be void (even if it gets more votes).

Note: Unused ESA funds currently roll over from one fiscal year to the next.

The key clause says an entire future bill or voter measure is void if it conflicts with this amendment.

AzPHA position

Vote No

Protect the Protect Education Act from being voided.

Public-health / practical lens

The practical effect is to create a poison pill against ESA accountability. If both measures pass, HCR2048 wipes out the Protect Education Act.

SCR1004

Photo-Enforcement Systems

Legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Would block new photo-enforcement systems unless a local contract existed by the end of 2026.

Cities already using cameras would need voter approval to keep programs and would return to voters every few years.

Applies to both speed cameras and life-saving *red-light intersection cameras*.

AzPHA position

Vote No

Keep local control for high-risk intersections.

Public-health / practical lens

Reasonable debate exists about speed-camera overuse, it is happening for sure. But red-light cameras at dangerous intersections dramatically reduce red-light running and serious T-bone crashes. Local communities should keep that tool.

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Other legislative referrals

Measures with public-health implications, but no AzPHA position

HCR2021

Local Grocery Taxes

2025 legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Limits municipal taxes on food for home consumption.

Cities below 2% could raise rates only with voter approval.

Cities at 2% or above couldn't increase grocery-tax rates.

The real impact is on long-term budget flexibility, especially for smaller towns that rely more heavily on local sales-tax revenue and have fewer alternative revenue sources. Alternatives are eliminating services or finding other revenue sources.

AzPHA position

No Position

Mixed public-health implications.

Public-health / practical lens

Grocery taxes are regressive and hit lower-income families harder. But the revenue can also support services used by lower-income residents. That is why this is not a simple public-health call.

Two measures with limited practical health impact

HCR2055

Drug cartels

Declares drug cartels to be terrorist organizations under Arizona law and directs the AZ Department of Homeland Security to address the threat they pose (mostly I guess in their grant applications?).

Practical impact is limited or zero: no new crime, penalty, arrest authority, seizure power of bank accounts or arrest or investigation authority. Performative?

AzPHA position

No Position

Performative & symbolic.

SCR1004 (2025)

Vehicle-mileage taxes

Would prohibit state and local government from imposing a vehicle-miles-traveled tax or fee.

Would also bar monitoring or limiting miles traveled without the driver's voluntary consent.

Came out of an idea posed by someone that maybe EV's should pay an assessment by the mile driven (since they don't pay gas taxes for roads)

AzPHA position

No Position

Most practical effect: takes miles driven off the table for EV-related fee policy.

HCR2003

“Protect Girls’ Sports in Arizona Act”

Legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Arizona already bans students classified as male at birth from girls’ school sports teams. Extends this to association ‘club’ teams too.

Adds athletic-facility restrictions by applying sex-based rules to athletic facilities like locker rooms, restrooms and shower rooms.

Extends facility rules to association ‘club’ team activities (not just school-based).

Ends the ability of females to participate in male sports teams (which does currently happen in rural AZ).

AzPHA position

No Position

AzPHA has not taken a position.

Public-health / practical lens

Arizona already restricts students classified as male at birth from girls’ school sports teams. This measure adds facility rules and expands compliance obligations. Would stop females from being able to participate on male teams.

School governance and labor measures

HCR2007

School district spending

Requires larger districts, and districts in Maricopa, Pima and Pinal counties, to spend at least 60% of operating funds on direct instructional expenses.

Noncompliant districts could lose portions of Classroom Site Fund allocations, with limited waivers.

AzPHA position

No Position

Potential effects depend on district structure and what gets counted as direct instruction. Buses and other services at risk.

HCR2040

School districts & labor organizations

Prohibits school districts from using public money or resources for union operations including union communications.

Teacher's union dues could not be auto-deducted from payroll checks..

Bars exclusive-representation (collective-bargaining) agreements w/ labor organizations including teachers, police, firefighters, corrections officers, city / county/ state employees.

AzPHA position

No Position

Major labor-governance impact; AzPHA has no position yet.

HCR2044

Preferential Treatment & Discrimination

Legislative referral — November 2026 ballot

Constitutionalizes a broad anti-DEI framework in all public education, restricting diversity statements and mandatory trainings across public government.

Would apply across public government and public education, including public universities. Private schools including ESA schools can do whatever they want.

Enforcement tool would be complaints, threatened litigation, injunctions, and lawsuits.

Likely to produce years of litigation over what counts as a program “implemented with reference to” race, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

AzPHA position

No Position

AzPHA has not taken a position.

Public-health / practical lens

Likely practical effect: years of litigation over what counts as a program “implemented with reference to” race, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Bottom Line

The public-health discussion questions:

- Does voting enhance civic participation? How does voting/civic participation impact health?
- Should private schools need to test for student achievement to get public dollars?
- Should homeschooler parents need to show they're using real curricula? Should they continue be able to use public money for 'field trips' to Sea World, pianos for music, & lift tickets for PE?
- Some cities (PV) overuse photo radar. Should that jeopardize life-saving photo red lights?
- What are the public health plusses & minuses of the 2% grocery tax cap?
- What might the real-life consequences of the anti DEI referral be?
- Should voters micromanage teacher's unions? Why? What about cops and fire/EMS?
- What might happen if we force public schools to spend > 60% of revenue in the classroom?
- Is it OK to ban females from participating in male sports teams to make sure athletic facilities are strict about who uses them?