



The 2019 legislative session is over, and Governor Ducey has finished his action on bills. Legislators will return to the Capitol to participate in study committees and constituent work throughout the rest of the year, but there is not any sign of a special legislative session. Most bills enacted this year will become effective on August 27, 2019.

The 2020 legislative session will convene on January 13, 2020.

2019 Outcomes

Bills Introduced:	1,318
Memorials and Resolutions Introduced:	100
Bills Passed by Legislature:	331
Proposals to Ballot:	0
Memorials and Resolutions Approved:	24
Bills Signed:	320
Bills Vetoed:	11

Priority Bills

Direct Primary Care

The legislature clarified Arizona's laws on [direct primary care](#) to make the model more accessible to physicians and consumers.

Medical Education

The legislature enacted funding for medical education programs including \$18.9 million for graduate medical education (\$10.1 million for rural GME, \$8 million for urban GME, and \$750,000 for North Country GME), \$750,000 for the Medical Loan Repayment Program, \$8 million for the University of Arizona's Health Sciences Center, and \$400,000 for mental health training for first responders.

Scope of Practice

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The legislature did not advance [a proposal](#) to expand pharmacists' ability to prescribe and administer medications to anyone who is six or older. It did, however, enact prescribing and dispensing privileges for [clinical nurse specialists](#) and a larger scope of practice for [dental hygienists and dental assistants](#).

KidsCare

The legislature made statutory changes and dedicated state funding to ensure enrollment continues in KidsCare, the children's insurance program.

AHCCCS Services

The legislature considered several new services for AHCCCS patients – including coverage for [chiropractic care](#), [dental care for pregnant women](#), dental care for [Native Americans](#), and additional [diabetes management assistance](#). No new services were enacted, however.

Vaping

Behind the scenes of the legislative process this year there was a passionate debate between tobacco and vaping companies and the health advocates who sought stronger limitations on minors' ability to access tobacco and e-cigarette products. In the end, neither side achieved their legislative goals. The industry's bill to override local regulations on the use of tobacco and increase the age at which Arizonans can access tobacco products failed to advance; so did the health advocates' proposal to include e-cigarettes and vaping products in the limitations of the voter-approved Smoke-Free Arizona law.

Vaccines

Arizona's debate on vaccinations made national news several times this year, as legislators decided whether to expand the current immunization exemptions for children in schools. Legislators also considered proposals to require health professionals to provide much more detailed information about immunization options before administering a vaccine. The discussion did not lead to statutory changes – either to expand or reduce the exemptions for parents who do not want their child to be vaccinated. Governor Ducey said he would veto any proposal that hinders the state's ability to promote vaccinations for school children.

Texting

The legislature enacted a ban on all [texting and hand-held use of cell phones](#) while driving in Arizona. Governor Ducey vetoed another proposal that would have outlawed all forms of [distracted driving](#) if it caused a threat to people or property.

Residential and Intermediate Care Institutions

The legislature authorized the Arizona Department of Health Services and the Arizona Department of Child Safety to expand investigations into licensees who want to work with children or vulnerable adults at a licensed residential care institution. The proposals were introduced in response to high-profile problems at [Southwest Key](#) and [Hacienda Healthcare](#).

Policy Outcomes

The legislature also considered a wide range of other policy changes. Some were enacted, and some were not. These discussions included:

Adoption

The legislature enacted [new processes](#) for the Department of Child Safety to follow to provide a child's biological or adoptive parent's contact information to a school if the child is receiving or in need of special education services and a court has not ordered otherwise. It also outlined procedures for notifying a school of which parent can consent or refuse to a child's initial evaluation for special education services in certain conditions.

Animal Abuse

The legislature enacted a class 1 misdemeanor for someone who knowingly or intentionally [harasses a police dog](#) and a class 5 felony for someone who [cruelly mistreats or kills a domestic animal](#). A proposal to create an [animal abuse registry](#) did not advance.

Arizona Health Education Centers

A bill to [expand the Arizona Health Education Centers](#) to include a center focused on the Indian health care delivery system received unanimous support early in the year, but did not advance to the Governor's desk.

Child Care Assistance

The legislature authorized state agencies to use \$56 million in federal funding for child care assistance programs.

Classroom Politics

Some legislators sought to implement [new penalties](#) for teachers and school personnel who promote a political or religious viewpoint in the classroom, but the proposals did not advance. The legislature did, however, add a requirement that the Attorney General notify legislative leaders if anyone officially complains that school personnel violated [existing state law](#) by attempting to influence the outcome of an election.

Community Schools

The legislature did not approve [a bill](#) to provide grant funding to help schools create community school plans that partner with community-based organizations to coordinate academic, social, and health services to enhance educational quality for students.

Computer Science

The legislature enacted [new priorities](#) for the Arizona Department of Education's Computer Sciences Professional Development Program Fund grant application process and required the State Board of Education and the Arizona Board of Regents to develop mathematics and science course guidelines.

Diaper Changing Stations

The legislature required public buildings that construct or renovate restrooms to include at least one [diaper-changing station](#) that can accommodate adults and babies, and can be accessed by both men and women.

Dyslexia

The legislature charged the Arizona Department of Education with creating a plan to screen students for indicators of dyslexia by July 1, 2020, and expanded dyslexia training for teachers and school administrators. It also created the Dyslexia Screening, Intervention and Funding for Pupils Identified as Having Indicators of Dyslexia Study Committee to evaluate and recommend services for students with dyslexia.

Education Tax

The legislative session began with a discussion about Republican support for a [new sales tax for education](#), but the proposal quickly stalled due to bipartisan opposition to the measure.

Empowerment Scholarship Accounts

The legislative session ended with bipartisan agreement on [a bill](#) that allows qualifying students to continue to use their Empowerment Scholarship Account funds to pay tuition for a school that is in another state but within two miles of the Arizona border. The change was inspired by confusion about ESA benefits for [families in Window Rock](#), whose children attend school across the border in New Mexico.

The legislature did not advance [a bill](#) to move oversight of the ESA program from the Arizona Department of Education to the State Treasurer, but did enact [a new law](#) to require the Department to hire a third-party administrator to assist it in the financial administration of the ESA program.

[A proposal](#) to expand eligibility for ESA benefits did not advance.

English Language Learning Programs

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The legislature amended state laws on requirements and procedures for [English Language Learner programs](#) early in the legislative session, and created an annual report on ELL programs.

A proposal that would have asked voters to [repeal the English Language Learner laws](#) was not approved.

Equal Rights Amendment

The legislature did not advance proposals to ratify the [Equal Rights Amendment](#).

Financial Literacy

The State Board of Education must require at least a half-course credit in [financial literacy and personal finance management](#) under a new law that was supported by the State Treasurer.

Gifted Education

The legislature appropriated \$1 million for gifted student education programs, and created a [study committee](#) to evaluate gifted education funding in Arizona.

Guns

Legislators introduced proposal to expand or restrict access to firearms in the state, but none were enacted. [A bill](#) to allow drivers to carry a loaded firearm in their vehicle on school grounds advanced, but failed to pass the Senate.

Housing

The legislature dedicated \$15 million to the Housing Trust Fund to help provide housing for low-income families. It prioritized \$3.5 million of that amount for housing assistance to individuals who are seriously mentally ill and chronically resistant to treatment.

Legislative Immunity

Governor Ducey [called for](#) a repeal of the Arizona Constitution's legislative immunity clause in his State of the State address, but legislative leaders believe the clause is still an important provision for the separation of powers. A proposal to ask voters to [repeal the immunity](#) did not advance.

Minimum Wage

The legislature considered a proposal to [allow employers to pay less than the minimum wage](#) to workers under the age of 22. The measure stalled due to bipartisan concerns about whether the proposal violated the voter-approved minimum wage law or deterred young Arizonans from going to college.

Mugshots

The legislature enacted a law to prevent the use of criminal justice records (like [mugshots](#)) for commercial purposes.

Parks

The legislature [re-established](#) the Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund, which was originally enacted in 2000 but repealed during the budget downturn in 2010. The legislature did not appropriate funding to the Heritage Fund this year.

Pornography

The legislature did not approve a proposal to [tax online pornography](#) to fund a border wall, but did pass a resolution that categorizes pornography as a [public health crisis](#).

School District Consolidation

The Senate did not advance [a bill](#) to require all school districts to be unified school districts by July 1, 2024.

School Safety

For the second year in a row, Governor Ducey included school safety as a priority in his State of the State Speech – and for the second year, the legislature failed to follow the Governor’s guidance on the issue. This year, the legislature never introduced Governor Ducey’s plan and failed to pass a variety of bills regarding firearms on campus and the creation of a Safe School Plan Task Force.

The budget, however, included \$20 million a year for schools to hire more school resource officers and school counselors, and the legislature enacted [a requirement](#) that schools adopt policies for reporting suspected crimes or threatening conduct. Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman announced that she would create the [Safe School Plan Task Force](#) even without legislative direction to do so, and would bring forward the Task Force recommendations to the legislature.

Governor Ducey recently said he hopes to continue to pursue his bigger goals for school safety in another legislative session.

Short-Term Rentals

The legislature approved new restrictions and penalties for misuse of [short-term housing rentals](#), to prevent “party houses” in Arizona neighborhoods.

Special Education

The legislature did not approve [a bill](#) to designate \$5 million for an Extraordinary Needs Grant program at the Arizona Department of Education.

Legislators did enact a bill that alters the statutory definition of “[home school district](#)” to reflect the role of school choice and ensure the right school officials are involved in discussions about their students.

Suicide Prevention

The legislature enacted a new requirement that the Arizona Health Care Containment System (AHCCCS) provide [suicide awareness and prevention training](#) for schools and teacher training programs.

The state budget also included \$1.7 million for veteran suicide prevention and trauma treatment service training through the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services.

Teacher’s Academy

The legislature designated \$15 million for the Teacher’s Academy at Arizona’s universities and community colleges.

Telemedicine

The legislature appropriated \$1 million for telemedicine and equipment to enhance prenatal care in rural Arizona (plus another \$1 million over the following two years). The legislature also enacted a bill to change insurance requirements and regulations to promote access to telemedicine.

Tuition

The Senate did not advance [a proposal](#) that would have created an Arizona tuition rate for an individual who applies for admission to an Arizona university or community college after graduating from an Arizona public, private, charter or home school.