



## Legislative News Bites



- **The State Legislature voted Monday to pass the \$50 million COVID-19 relief package** to which we alerted you last week. The package grants the governor authority to use these funds to prevent evictions/foreclosures, assist small businesses, and support organizations assisting people experiencing homelessness. Secular AZ supported a timely passage of this legislation to help curb the spread of the virus in accordance with leading scientific advice. **A huge thank you goes out to everyone who wrote their lawmakers in support last weekend.**
- Governor Doug Ducey allocated \$2 million to a statewide 211 crisis information line, under a restriction (opposed by Secular AZ) that **211 not use state funds to provide referrals to services that provide abortions**. We will continue to fight against this "gag rule" in future budget bills, as well as in other pieces of legislation where it appears (such as this year's **HB2388**).
- The U.S. Justice Department indicated this week in a **statement of interest** signed by Attorney General Barr that it would support a legal challenge against Connecticut for its policy allowing transgender girls to participate in athletics. **This provides ammunition to the supporters of HB2706, which seeks to ban all trans athletes from participating in girls' sports.** We will continue to fight as hard as we can against this discriminatory bill should it resurface after the legislature's current recess.

**The Legislature is currently adjourned until at least April 13th, but the session has not ended.** We are continuing to watch and report from the Capitol, and to engage with constituents as best we can as we practice safe social distancing. [Click here to check out our most recent Facebook livestream from Secular AZ's lobbyist](#), and be on the lookout for more online events.

# Religious Right Watch



## Socially distant ≠ politically inactive

Religious conservative lobbying juggernaut Center for Arizona Policy recently sent an email to supporters **discouraging them from signing citizen petitions** during the COVID-19 crisis. Secular AZ, on the other hand, recognizes the importance of keeping democracy functioning during the pandemic, and **condemns any exploitation of the crisis to suppress grassroots activism.**

We recognize that signing petitions during this time is a personal choice. Should you choose to sign one, please consider bringing your own pen and always wash or sanitize your hands thoroughly. Also keep in mind that candidate nominating petitions can be

signed [online](#).

Misinformation can be deadly, as shown by the example of [this pastor](#), who died after railing against COVID-19 coverage in the media, and [this Arizonan](#) who died after believing President Trump recommended ingesting an ingredient in fish poison. We urge supporters to only take scientifically-accurate advice from reliable sources, such as the [World Health Organization](#) or [Centers for Disease Control](#).

## Take Our Survey

We want to know what our supporters find most helpful in a time when things seem uncertain, and when the legislature isn't functioning in its typical capacity.

*What can Secular AZ provide to you, and what's the best way to provide it?*

Please take a few minutes to [complete a quick survey](#) that'll allow you to express your opinion on the issues facing secular Arizonans at this time, and to let us know what you need and how Secular AZ can best help.

We'll use your responses when we reach out to keep our community engaged and informed. To start the survey, [please click here](#).

## Other statewide and national news:

[Arizona lawmaker says cities should not mandate business closures](#)

[Anti-Abortion Groups Ask Trump's HHS to Use COVID-19 Outbreak to Stop Abortion](#)

[Why Trump's goal to end social distancing by Easter is so dangerous](#)

[Pennsylvania State Rep Files Resolution Calling for 'State Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer' to Atone for Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[Christian Group: Don't Call Us an Anti-LGBTQ "Hate Group" During a Pandemic!](#)

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