

## Secular AZ News



### ***To sine die or not to sine die.. that is the question!***

The Legislature is still deliberating whether or not to continue session.

On Tuesday, it was reported that Senate President Fann and Speaker Bowers had an agreement with Democrat Leadership to sine die

(end the legislative session) on May 1st. This changed within the following 24 hours as House Speaker Bowers caved into the will of many GOP lawmakers who complained that they wanted to reopen the Capitol for business as usual and pass their special-interest legislation.

Then, in an unexpected twist on the same day as this announcement, [Senator Lupe Contreras \(D-19\) released the news that he and four of his family members have COVID-19.](#)

"This changes everything," Republican Senator Heather Carter was reported saying.

It was reported on Thursday that **Senators Heather Carter (R-15) and Paul Boyer (R-20) told leadership they would not return to the Capitol** for any votes that were not related to the budget or COVID-19. If these Senators are true to their word, the Senate would lose its GOP majority for any future votes.

"This changes everything" is quite accurate. **How can GOP lawmakers complain about not getting their special interest legislation passed when the world is in crisis?** The only thing the state legislature should be focusing on right now is helping Arizonans get through this crisis. We certainly don't need another 4-hour debate on whether or not trans girls should be allowed to play high school tennis.

You can count on Secular AZ to keep you posted on this constantly changing situation. We recommend that the legislature adjourns *sine die* as soon as possible, and then come back when needed under a special session to address the \$1.1B shortfall expected from shutting down the state.

**Do you want to learn more about what happened this session? Join our Director of Government Affairs on Saturday, April 25, at 2PM to learn more about the bills on which we were working and what we think is going to happen. We will host a Q&A session immediately following the session.**

This session is open for Secular AZ members and members of our Liaised groups. If you did not receive an invitation and you are a member of Secular AZ or a liaised group, please contact [linsay@secularaz.org](mailto:linsay@secularaz.org) for more information.

## Religious Right Watch

Right-wing politicians in Arizona have been on the move recently using religion oppose policy protecting the public health.

**Reps David Farnsworth (R, Mesa), Kelly Townsend (R, Mesa) and other GOP candidates vying for elected office have cited religion to encourage protests to "re-open" Arizona from the COVID-19 lockdown,**

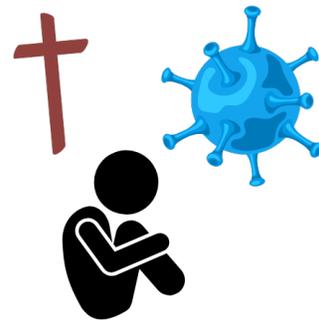
500 of these protestors converged on the AZ State Capitol this last week, demanding that Governor Ducey open the state early, despite scientific data and expert warnings to the contrary.

In a speech to kick off the march, **Farnsworth said "Satan is behind" the restrictions** on commerce and movement that have been implemented broadly across the country.

Legislative District 16 candidate Forest Moriarty also invoked a higher power when he addressed the crowd. **"The Constitution doesn't give you your freedom to assemble... God gives you that right," Moriarty said. "I need you to remember the words said by Moses, 'Let my people go.'"**

Meanwhile, **Sen. Eddie Farnsworth (R, Gilbert) supported exemptions for clergy to be required to report child abuse.** The statement comes in response to a [child molestation scandal](#) within the LDS church in Bisbee.

"To force a clergy member to report a confidential communication changes the whole nature of the confessional," said state Farnsworth, a member of the Mormon church. Earlier this year, he declined to give a hearing to a bill that sought to further narrow the clergy exemption.



## Announcements



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