

## Secular AZ News

### Religious right steers COVID-19 decision-making in AZ

Even as Governor Ducey [extends his stay-at-home order for another two weeks](#) (albeit with some loosened restrictions), a small cabal of right-wing lawmakers is continuing to risk Arizona lives in the name of special interests and fringe anti-science beliefs.

- [Attorney General Mark Brnovich has ruled that churches are "essential services" and not subject to an absolute six foot social distancing requirement.](#)
- [The Arizona Legislature has still not reached an agreement whether to end legislative session, even as one of its own members has tested positive for COVID-19](#)



**Both decisions have been driven in large part by a small but vocal group of right-wing legislators.** The request for legal opinion on the church matter was submitted by Rep. Kelly Townsend (R-16), whose track record includes the propagation of several fringe anti-science and extreme "religious liberty" bills.

The nominally "pro-life" Townsend has also recently [threatened to introduce a concurrent resolution to end the current state of emergency](#) stating that it is business owners' "God-given right" to risk spreading death by COVID-19 by staying open. However, this is a goal with no clear path to victory. The majority of lawmakers want to end session, and Senate President Fann has warned lawmakers to consider the fact that all federal funding for COVID-19 would be lost if such a resolution passes.

This rhetoric emerges even as [hundreds of religious leaders have urged Governor Ducey to extend his order.](#)

**Secular AZ calls upon Senate President Fann and House Speaker Bowers to show leadership and adjourn the legislature *sine die* as soon as possible, to return only under a special session to address outstanding issues related to COVID-19 and the anticipated \$1.1B budget shortfall incurred by the state shutdown.**

[Sign the petition now](#)

## Announcements

**The Virtual Speaker Series Continues!**

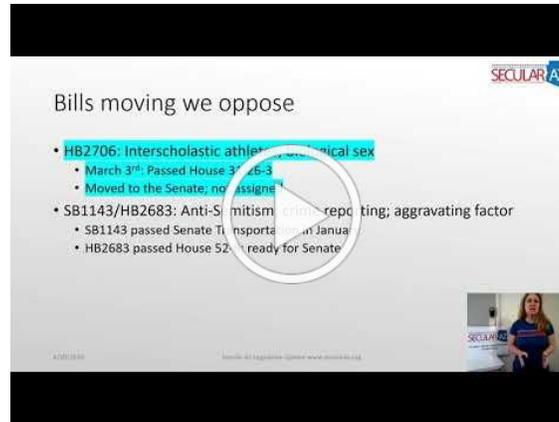
Secular AZ is continuing its members-only virtual speaker series! Members of Secular AZ and members of our [liaised organizations](#) around the state may attend live via Zoom. (Not a member yet? [Contact us](#) for more info.)



Upcoming presentations:

- Sunday, May 3, 10a: Ed Martin: Build Thriving, Sustainable Lives, Communities and Economies; part of the [HSGP Sunday Speaker Series](#)
- Saturday, May 9, 2p: Dianne Post, Secular AZ Legal Director: 2020 Legal Update
- Sunday, May 17, 10a: The Connection Between Religion, Tribalism, and Government; part of the [HSGP Sunday Speaker Series](#)

For more information on what we've been up to at the Capitol, also check out Secular AZ lobbyist Tory Roberg's [recorded Legislative Update below!](#)



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Membership

