SECULAR AZ
AZ'S VOICE FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

SECULAR AZ LEGAL REPORT

DIANNE POST, J.D.
LEGAL DIRECTOR

2024

2024 COMPLAINTS

- Schools: 21
- City Councils/City Boards: 10
  - Dept. of Corrections
  - Senate
  - ADOT
  - HOA
  - Supreme Court of AZ
- Elected Officials - 2 Dept. of Education
- Schools/Churches Elections Violations: 71

Previous Complaints:

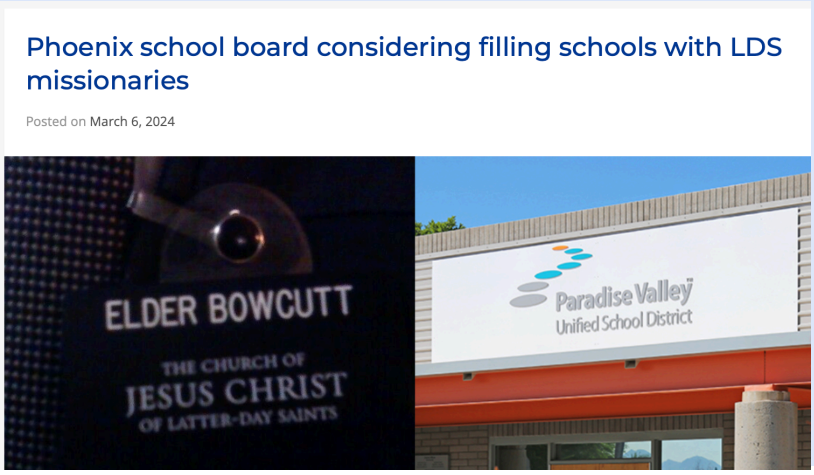
- 2023: 61
- 2022: 34
- 2021: 32
- 2020: 32
- 2019: 27
- 2018: 13
- 2017: 12

SUCCESSES

- Apache Junction revised their invocation policy
- School counseled teacher about punishing student for not standing for the Pledge of Allegiance
- One church pastor called to say he didn't know he couldn't campaign
- School counseled teacher about forcing student to turn his t-shirt inside out due to political message

SUCCESSES

- ADOC admitted they have not met the needs of Muslim prisoners and will take steps.
- Turning Point USA threatened us but had to withdraw when 1) they had not case and 2) their attorney was suspended.
- PVUSD did not sign contract with LDS church.



LOSSES

- Camp Verde is teaching a bible class in school. Due to climate of fear, no one will step forward to be plaintiff.
- Show Low student had to retain attorney to fight discrimination.
- Peoria school board member Rooks rejected our amicus submission.

LOSSES

- Many cities and schools are ignoring us thanks to the increasing power of Christian nationalists
- Likewise with churches violating election law. They know they will not be held accountable. Congress just cut funding to IRS.

There were 51 reports of church electioneering from out of state. In all cases, Linsay replied with this information:

- Thank you for reaching out. Secular AZ only works on violations within the state of Arizona, but we do recommend you report church electioneering to the IRS. There's a step-by-step guide on our website that makes it simple: https://secularaz.org/church-electioneering/
- We also highly recommend you report this electioneering to other organizations that deal with it at the national level. At the bottom of the webpage (https://secularaz.org/church-electioneering/) and below, you'll find links to Freedom from Religion Foundation, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and more. These links will take you directly to electioneering reporting:
  - Freedom from Religion Foundation
  - Americans United for Separation of Church and State
  - American Atheists
  - Humanist Legal Center
- Keep in mind that it is legal for churches to campaign on an issue, such as a ballot proposition, but illegal for churches to endorse candidates. Pictures/videos/copies/etc. of violations are very helpful when making a report.
- Thank you so much for standing up for separation of church and state, as the Constitution requires.

LAWYER TRAININGS 2024-2025

- Workshop at State Bar Convention June 2025 on Book Banning in Arizona
- Workshop at State Bar Convention June 2024 on Censorship in Schools

PUBLICATIONS

Intern wrote an article on the new HHS rule benefiting the LGBTQA+ community and reproductive rights and another about new legislation to bolster religious freedom in the military.

He also wrote about the Superintendent of the Dept of Education approving Prager "U" materials in AZ schools, and a revealing story about his introduction to the legislative process.

State Bar seminar materials.

An article re the May abortion decision regarding the Ducey 15 week ban v. the 1864 law.

OTHER ACTIONS

- Assisted group near Ajo to complain about crosses on state highways
- Assisted candidate with campaign materials
- Assisted group fighting church expansion in Oro Valley
- Filed objection with Supreme Court Ethics Committee re: judges participating in Red Mass in robes

INFRASTRUCTURE

- ASU Legal Intern starting in Jan 2024
- Legal Committee
- Raising funds for hiring attorney

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT

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