



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, First Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1286

elections; voting centers; polling places

Purpose

Requires a state, county, city, town or school district office and schools within a school district (district schools) with a gymnasium to provide sufficient space for use as a polling place for any election when requested by the officer in charge of elections. Removes the ability of a district and charter school principal to deny a request for use as a polling place. Requires district schools to close on an election day.

Background

The county board of supervisors (county BOS) must establish a convenient number of election precincts in the county and define the boundaries of the precincts. The county BOS must designate a polling place within each precinct before a general or special election. Upon request from the officer in charge of elections, public schools must provide sufficient space for use as a polling place for any city, county or state election. The principal of a public school may deny the request if the principal provides a written statement within two weeks after the request, indicating why the election cannot be held in the school, including if: 1) space is not available at the school; or 2) the safety or welfare of the children would be jeopardized. The county BOS, on a specific resolution, may authorize the use of voting centers in place of, or in addition to, specifically designated polling places. A voting center must allow any voter in the county to receive the appropriate ballot for the voter on election day after presenting identification ([A.R.S. § 16-411](#)).

District and charter schools must close on July 4, Veterans' Day, December 25 and Thanksgiving Day. During the closure, the compensation of teachers may not be diminished. School district governing boards may declare a recess during the Christmas holiday season that does not exceed two weeks and teachers must receive compensation during the recess ([A.R.S. § 15-801](#)).

A person may excuse themselves from their service or employment to vote at the primary or general election on election day if: 1) there are less than three hours between the opening of the polls and the beginning of their shift; or 2) if there are less than three hours between the end of their shift and the closing of the polls. If a person qualifies to be excused, then the person may be absent for up to three consecutive hours ([A.R.S § 16-402](#)).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Removes the authority of the county BOS to use voting centers in place of specifically designated polling places.

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2. Requires a state, county, city, town or school district office and district schools with a gymnasium to provide sufficient space for use as a polling place for any election when requested by the officer in charge of elections.
3. Removes the ability of the principal of a district or charter school to deny a request to provide space for use as a polling place for an election by providing a written statement indicating that:
 - a) space is not available at the school; or
 - b) the safety or welfare of the children would be jeopardized.
4. Requires district schools to close on a primary election day and a general election day.
5. Exempts a school that is requested for use as a polling place from any state, local or school district requirements that would restrict the use of the school and its gymnasium as a polling place.
6. Requires teachers and staff of district schools to receive or conduct in-service training or development activities on a primary election day and a general election day.
7. Prohibits teachers and staff from using personal, vacation or other leave time on a primary and general election day.
8. Specifies that the prohibition relating to teachers and staff taking time off on an election day does not apply to a school district providing an employee time off to vote as required by statute.
9. Defines *gymnasium* as an indoor room or facility suitable for sporting events, including basketball or volleyball, and excluding a cafeteria or an auditorium.
10. Makes technical and conforming changes.
11. Becomes effective on the general effective date.

Prepared by Senate Research

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AN/cs