



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Steve Montenegro (R-29)

Representative Michael Carbone (R-25)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Representatives Montenegro and Carbone Urge Secretary Fontes to Extend Public Comment Period for 2023 Elections Procedures Manual

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – Arizona State Representatives Steve Montenegro and Michael Carbone today criticized an extremely short public comment period set by Secretary of State Adrian Fontes for his 2023 Elections Procedure Manual (EPM) draft and called on the Secretary to extend the deadline for public comment. Secretary Fontes only released his draft on Tuesday and set the deadline for August 15, even though he is not required to produce it to the Governor or Attorney General until October 1.

**“The Elections Procedures Manual is of paramount importance to ensuring the integrity and security of election administration in Arizona,”** said Representative Montenegro. **“Secretary Fontes should have given the public more than 15 days to review his extensive 259-page draft of the EPM and submit comments. A longer comment period is particularly necessary and reasonable this year because Arizona has not had a legally compliant EPM since 2019.”**

Arizona Revised Statute § [16-452](#) allows the Secretary of State to write an Elections Procedure Manual every odd year before each general election. The EPM is intended to provide legal and statutorily consistent guidance to elections officers throughout the state. Arizona’s 2022 elections were administered with the 2019 EPM even though state law requires the EPM to be updated every two years.

**“Requiring public comments to be submitted by August 15<sup>th</sup> is simply too restrictive and does not provide adequate time for interested stakeholders to review the draft 2023 EPM for compliance with state law,”** said Representative Carbone. **“It is our understanding that several provisions have already been identified that appear to run afoul of state law. We urge Secretary Fontes to extend the public comment deadline to at least September 1, 2023, to give the public an adequate opportunity to review and provide input on the most important elections manual that will guide county officials in administering their duties in the 2024 elections.”**

Representatives Montenegro and Carbone believe that we should not allow the adoption of an unlawful EPM for use in the 2024 election and they encourage Arizona voters to participate in the process to keep both elected and unelected elections officers transparent and accountable. The official 2023 EPM draft is available for review [HERE](#), and public comment can be submitted [HERE](#) only until August 15, unless Secretary Fontes extends the deadline.

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