



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives
Speaker Ben Toma (R-27)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

House Approves Fiscally Conservative State Budget that Trims Government and Protects School Choice

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The Arizona House of Representatives today approved a fiscally responsible and structurally balanced state budget for FY25. The bipartisan agreement was negotiated between House Speaker Ben Toma, Senate President Petersen, and Governor Hobbs. Following its passage, Speaker Toma issued the following statement:

“At a time when Arizonans are having to tighten their financial belts, so is state government. The Arizona House of Representatives has passed a fiscally conservative, structurally balanced state budget that solves the nearly \$1.5 billion deficit, without touching the rainy-day fund or using budget gimmickry. The budget trims government and protects conservative priorities. It increases funding for local border support operations and assists fentanyl interdiction efforts by law enforcement. It funds transportation and infrastructure and maintains our state’s commitment to water security.

“I’m most proud of the fact that this budget fully protects the state’s universal Empowerment Scholarship Account (ESA) program which provides educational freedom for Arizona families. Democrats have long vowed to dismantle the program. As the sponsor of the universal expansion of ESAs, I was never going to let that happen. Eligibility for the program is unchanged and we have included several smart, commonsense reforms that improve this popular school choice program and increases accountability.”

Commonsense reforms to the ESA program passed in the state budget include:

- Requiring the Department of Education (ADE) to utilize risk-based auditing of the program.
- Parents will retain their ability to be reimbursed for approved expenses.
- Parents will be able to plan for the next school year by applying early.
- Implements fingerprinting requirements for private educators, matching current STO law.

The Senate approved budget bills on Saturday, which will now be sent to the Governor for her signature.

Ben Toma is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and serves Legislative District 27, which includes areas of Glendale, Peoria, and Phoenix. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepBenToma.

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