



# NEWS RELEASE

**Arizona House of Representatives**

**Representative Matt Gress (R-4)**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## State Representative Matt Gress Condemns Misuse of Taxpayer Funds by Arizona School Districts, Demands Better Stewardship & Accountability in Spending

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – State Representative Matt Gress is responding to newly released reports that highlight the misuse of taxpayer funds by Arizona school districts for out-of-state travel.

A report released last week by the Goldwater Institute ([bit.ly/3Yg6Bew](https://bit.ly/3Yg6Bew)) revealed that the Phoenix Elementary School District Governing Board had approved the use of taxpayer dollars to send a school board member to the 2024 Local Progress Conference in Oakland, California. The conference agenda focused on promoting far-left radical political ideologies and activism with minimal relevance to educational development. Under public scrutiny, district officials subsequently canceled the trip.

Additionally, the Auditor General's Office released a report ([bit.ly/4ddaeWS](https://bit.ly/4ddaeWS)) last week documenting that the Baboquivari Unified School District spent nearly \$500,000 on travel, much of which was unnecessary and wasteful. This included approximately \$342,000 for a two-day out-of-state conference, with some expenditures exceeding state guidelines and lacking required approvals.

Representative Gress expressed his concerns over this misuse of public funds:

**“These are troubling reports about where our education dollars are going. As a former teacher and school board member, and someone who is passionate about the value of a public education, it’s important to me that the dollars taxpayers invest go to classrooms, students, and teachers.**

**“These education dollars should not be used on lavish trips and conferences, especially when we are dealing with a teacher crisis and are told that districts don’t have the dollars necessary to raise salaries. This kind of irresponsible behavior further erodes public trust and makes it harder for those of us who are advocating for more dollars for education to make our case.**

**“I’d like to acknowledge the Goldwater Institute’s efforts in bringing more attention to these concerning expenses. Unfortunately, there are even more examples being uncovered. I will continue to monitor this issue and call upon leaders to be better stewards of public dollars. Classrooms are where these dollars belong — not on junkets for school board members and administrators to attend conferences pushing extreme and political agendas.”**

*Matt Gress is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 4 in Phoenix. Follow him on X/Twitter at @MatthewGress.*

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