

## WHO'S FOR KIDS AND WHO'S JUST KIDDING?

*A 2015 Legislative Wrap-Up and Report Card for Kids*

May 2015

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### Where's the Balance?

Governor Ducey and many legislators are making proud pronouncements about their votes on the new state budget. They said they had to make dramatic cuts to K-12 and university education, child care, health care, and child safety because their priority was to keep revenues and expenditures in balance. But just weeks after adopting what they called a structurally balanced budget, those same lawmakers voted for several more tax cuts that depress the revenue side of the ledger – and put children and education at risk for more damage on the spending side of the ledger.

For example, after he signed the budget, Governor Ducey signed SB 1188 that again cuts business income taxes. The cost to the state's general fund will be \$31 million a year – starting now, even before the new fiscal year begins. With no policy to replace that revenue, the Governor has deliberately altered the tax base to make it harder to invest in kids and education for years to come.

Unfortunately, this cycle is nothing new. Arizona has been cutting taxes consistently for 25 years in the name of economic growth. Often those tax cuts have been followed by cuts to education to keep the budget in balance.

In fact, much of the current budget deficit has been self imposed through past policy choices. More than one third of the projected budget gap between revenues and expenses for next fiscal year is because of tax cuts passed since the Great Recession began. Back in 2009 and 2010, legislators voted to phase in these tax cuts that put **Arizona on the path to today's budget imbalances. Combined, these tax cuts wiped out \$383 million in revenues** – that amount would have been enough to avoid all of the new cuts to K-12 and higher education, the cuts to child safety and economic security, and the cuts to our health care system.

Now is the time for Arizona to change course and lay the groundwork for a long term fiscal plan that fulfills our common vision:

- Stop shrinking the tax base and growing the deficit;
- Demand results for tax cuts and tax credits;
- Get smarter on crime and slow the growth in prisons;
- Update our tax policies so that well off families and corporations pay their fair share; and
- Reverse the cuts to K-12 education so that more children across our state can grow up to reach their dreams.



# THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## HB 2022—Tuition Waiver for Former Foster Youth

Supported by CAA, this bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Ducey.

Sponsored by Representative Kate Brophy McGee, this legislation fixes a glitch in the Tuition Waiver Pilot Program for former foster youth which was originally passed in 2013. The old law was shutting out students who transferred from community colleges to state universities. Now more foster youth alumni can get the opportunity for a college education, because they can qualify for a tuition waiver up to age 23.



## HB 2069—Future Drain of State Funding

Opposed by CAA, this bill passed the House and a Senate Committee but never received a full Senate vote.

Sponsored by Representative J.D. Mesnard, this bill would have shifted taxes from the wealthiest Arizonans to low and middle income taxpayers and pre-empted decisions about future fiscal policies for future legislatures. The legislation would have required the Arizona Department of Revenue to reduce state individual income tax rates if Congress passed the Marketplace Fairness Act. It was intended to lock in future legislatures to prevent the state from receiving any additional revenue if Arizona begins applying the sales tax to on-line purchases – closing off future options for investments in child safety and education.

## HB 2098 —Department of Child Safety

Supported by CAA, this bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Ducey.

This legislation makes technical corrections for the new Department of Child Safety. It strengthens confidentiality provisions and allows DCS to use electronic notifications. The bill also requires DCS to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to explore the capacity of private entities to help the state address the backlog of inactive cases of child abuse and neglect.

## HB 2166—Public Disclosure of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases

Supported by CAA, this bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Ducey.

Sponsored by Representative Kate Brophy McGee, this legislation clarifies and expands the information DCS must provide to the public in a case with a fatality or near fatality due to child abuse, abandonment or neglect. Specifically, information to be released includes prior reports and services concerning the child, a **member of the child’s family or the person suspected of the child fatality or near fatality**. Prior to this law change, information was released only when there was prior DCS involvement with a direct history between that same child and that same alleged perpetrator.

# THE 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## HB 2611—A New Form of Predatory Lending

Opposed by CAA, HB 2611 passed the House but was never heard in the Senate.

In an effort to get around the voter-approved ban on predatory interest rates, out-of-state payday lenders pushed HB 2611, called “consumer flex loans.” Sponsored by Representative J.D. Mesnard, this bill would have allowed exorbitant fees on these loans, effectively creating an annual interest rate exceeding 200%. Just like payday loans, this proposed structure would have made it nearly impossible for working families to climb their way out of debt.

## SB 1188– Business Tax Cuts

Opposed by CAA, this bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Ducey.

This bill increases the income tax deduction for certain business expenses from \$25,000 to \$500,000 at a cost to the general fund of \$31 million a year beginning in FY 2015. This bill was passed by the legislature and signed by the Governor after the budget was adopted. This revenue loss - with no plan on how to pay for it - leads to projected shortfalls in FY 2017 and 2018, and lower revenue for future investments in child safety, child care, and education.

## SB 1469—The FY16 Arizona Budget

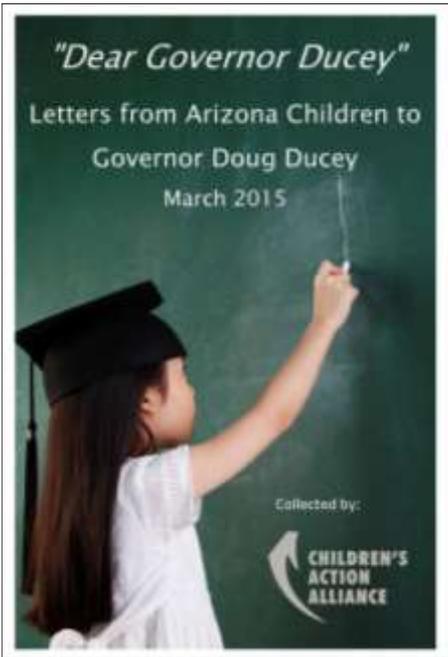
Opposed by CAA, SB 1469 passed the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Ducey.

The budget includes a number of cuts that will leave more children in danger and drive up child neglect. It leaves the Department of Child Safety ill-equipped to respond to growing reports of child abuse and neglect. It shrinks investments in higher education and hands public school students larger class sizes, growing teacher shortages, less technology, weaker infrastructure, and fewer options for preschool and after school education.

Specifics of the budget include:

- Cuts \$11 million out of the Department of Child Safety budget to handle the backlog of child abuse and neglect cases – even though the backlog is higher than ever.
- Zeroes out state funding for child care vouchers for low-income working families, leaving children in dangerous and unstable situations while their parents go to work.
- Sweeps housing assistance funds and youth treatment funds, leaving more families vulnerable to crisis.
- Cuts \$146 million from K-12 district schools and charter schools.
- Cuts health care payment rates to doctors, hospitals, and ambulances, diminishing access to our health care system.





## Dear Governor Ducey...

After Governor Doug Ducey was elected in November 2014, CAA invited children to write him a personal letter about their families, their schools, their neighborhoods, and their hopes and dreams for the future. The letters convey messages of encouragement and urgency for our new governor from children who will one day be the grown-ups and leaders in our state.

Many of the letters talk about excitement for learning. They also describe frustrations and missing pieces at school, such as not enough supplies, old textbooks and outdated technology, broken band instruments that can't be fixed, and a lack of arts, sports, and after-school activities. An 8th grader named Stephanie echoed other observations about overcrowded classrooms: "In school there are many good things like good teachers and my best friends. It may not seem like 35 kids is

like good teachers and my best friends. It may not seem like 35 kids is a lot, but when you have students without desks it is pretty hard to go unnoticed. During class discussions having 30 to 40 kids in a room all trying to participate means not everyone gets a turn."

None of the kids who wrote these letters have seen the new state budget plan. But there is a very clear and very large gap between the aspirations and basic needs expressed in these letters and the budget adopted by our state leaders.

The budget signed by Governor Ducey includes no new investments for students in neighborhood or charter school. The small net increase in the total K-12 budget falls far short of true costs due to more students and inflation. This will lead to larger class sizes, growing teacher shortages, less technology, weaker infrastructure, and fewer options for preschool and after school education, making it so much harder for Arizona students to reach their hopes and dreams.

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## How to Use This Guide

CAA believes that every lawmaker has the responsibility to vote for kids. Our legislators should be held accountable and measured on their performance. Each year, the 90 members of our state legislature vote on dozens of bills that shape the education, health and safety of Arizona children and families. Governor Ducey shapes issues with his policy priorities, budget proposals and his veto or signature on bills.

This report card tracks five votes in the Senate and seven in the House of Representatives in 2015. During the legislative session, Children's Action Alliance analyzed and took a stand on these bills, asking lawmakers to vote "yes" or "no" for kids.

In the chart, a ★ is shown for each vote for kids that corresponds to our recommendation. A "NV" for "not voting" indicates that the legislator did not vote or was absent. If the legislator cast a vote contrary to what's best for kids, the vote box is left blank. "NV" votes are not counted in the legislator's overall percentage score.

State Senator	HB 2022	HB 2098	HB 2166	SB 1188	SB 1469	2015 Grade for Kids
Ed Ableser (LD 26 - Tempe)	★	NV	NV	★	★	100%
Sylvia Allen (LD 6 - Sedona, Flagstaff, Snowflake)	★	★	★			60%
Nancy Barto (LD 15 - North Phoenix)	★	★	★			60%
Carlyle Begay (LD 7 - Northeast Arizona)	★	★	★	★		80%
Andy Biggs (LD 12 - Gilbert)	★	★	★			60%
David Bradley (LD 10 - East, Central Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Judy Burges (LD 22 - Surprise, Sun City West)	★	★	★			60%
Olivia Cajero Bedford (LD 3 - West Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Lupe Contreras (LD 19 - Avondale, Tolleson)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Andrea Dalessandro (LD 2 - S. Tucson, Santa Cruz County)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Jeff Dial (LD 18 - Ahwatukee, Chandler, S. Tempe)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Adam Driggs (LD 28 - North East Phoenix)	★	★	★			60%
Steve Farley (LD 9 - Midtown Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
David Farnsworth (LD 16 Apache Junction, East Mesa)	★	★	★			60%
Gail Griffin (LD 14 - Southeast Arizona)	★	★	★			60%
Katie Hobbs (LD 24 - Central and East Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
John Kavanagh (LD 23 - Scottsdale, Fountain Hills)	★	★	★			60%
Debbie Lesko (LD 21 - Peoria, Sun City)	★	★	★			60%
Barbara McGuire (LD 8 - Pinal County)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Robert Meza (LD 30 - West Central Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Catherine Miranda (LD 27 - South Phoenix)	NV	★	★	NV	★	100%
Lynne Pancrazi (LD 4 - S. Yuma County & W. Pima County)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Steve Pierce (LD 1 - Anthem, Yavapai County)	NV	★	★		NV	67%
Martin Quezada (LD 29 - West Phoenix, Glendale)	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Don Shooter (LD 13 - N. Yuma County, W. Maricopa County)	★	★	★			60%
Steve Smith (LD 11 - Marana, Oro Valley)	★	★	★			60%
Kelli Ward (LD 5 - La Paz & Mohave Counties)	★	★	★			60%
Bob Worsley (LD 25 - Mesa)	★	★	★			60%
Steve Yarbrough (LD 17 - Chandler)	★	★	★			60%
Kimberly Yee (LD 20 - Northwest Phoenix)	★	★	★			60%

★ = a vote for kids

blank = no vote for kids

NV = not voting or absent

State Representative	HB 2022	HB 2069	HB 2098	HB 2166	HB 2611	SB 1188	SB 1469	2015 Grade for Kids
John Ackerley (LD 2 - S Tucson, Santa Cruz County)	★	★	★	★	★		★	86%
John Allen (LD 15 - North Phoenix)	★			★				29%
Lela Alston (LD 24 - Central and East Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Richard C. Andrade (LD 29 - W Phoenix, Glendale)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Brenda Barton (LD 6 - Sedona, Flagstaff)	★		★	★				43%
Jennifer D. Benally (LD 7 - Northeast Arizona)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Reginald Bolding Jr. (LD 27 - South Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Sonny Borrelli (LD 5 - La Paz & Mohave Counties)	★		★	★				43%
Rusty Bowers (LD 25 - Mesa)	★		★	★				43%
Paul Boyer (LD 20 - Northwest Phoenix)	★		★	★				43%
Kate Brophy McGee (LD 28 - North East Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Noel Campbell (LD 1 - Anthem, Yavapai County)	★		★	★				43%
Mark Cardenas (LD 19 - Avondale, Tolleson)	★	★	★	★	★		★	86%
Heather Carter (LD 15 - North Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Ken Clark (LD 24 - Central and East Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Regina Cobb (LD 5 - La Paz & Mohave Counties)	★		★	★				43%
Doug Coleman (LD 16 - Apache Junction, E Mesa)	★	★	★	★		★		71%
Diego Espinoza (LD 19 - Avondale, Tolleson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Karen Fann (LD 1 - Anthem, Yavapai County)	★		★	★				43%
Eddie Farnsworth (LD 12 - Gilbert)	★		★	★				43%
Charlene Fernandez (LD 4 - S Yuma & W Pima Counties)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Mark Finchem (LD 11 - Marana, Oro Valley)	★		★	★				43%
Randall Friese (LD 9 - Midtown Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Rosanna Gabaldón (LD 2 - S Tucson, Santa Cruz Cnty)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Sally Ann Gonzales (LD 3 - West Tucson)	★	NV	★	★	★	★	★	100%
David M. Gowan, Sr. (LD 14 - Southeast Arizona)	★		★	★				43%
Rick Gray (LD 21 - Peoria, Sun City)	★		★	★				43%
Albert Hale (LD 7 - Northeast Arizona)	★	★	★	NV	★	★	★	100%
Anthony Kern (LD 20 - Northwest Phoenix)	★		★	★				43%
Jonathan Larkin (LD 30 - West Central Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%

★ = a vote for kids

blank = no vote for kids

NV = not voting or absent

State Representative	HB 2022	HB 2069	HB 2098	HB 2166	HB 2611	SB 1188	SB 1469	2015 Grade for Kids
Jay Lawrence (LD 23 - Scottsdale, Fountain Hills)	★		★	★				43%
Vince Leach (LD 11 - Marana, Oro Valley)	★		★	★				43%
David Livingston (LD 22 - Surprise, Sun City West)	★		★	★				43%
Phil Lovas (LD 22 - Surprise, Sun City West)	★		★	★				43%
Stefanie Mach (LD 10 - East, Central Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Debbie McCune Davis (LD 30 - West Central Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Juan Jose Mendez (LD 26 - Tempe)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
J.D. Mesnard (LD 17 - Chandler)	★		★	★				43%
Eric Meyer (LD 28 - North East Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Darin Mitchell (LD 13 - N Yuma & W Maricopa Counties)	★		★	★				43%
Steve Montenegro (LD 13 - N Yuma & W Maricopa Counties)	★		★	★				43%
Jill Norgaard (LD 18 - Ahwatukee, Chandler, S Tempe)	★		★	★				43%
Justin Olson (LD 25 - Mesa)	★		★	★				43%
Lisa Otondo (LD 4 - S Yuma & W Pima Counties)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Warren Petersen (LD 12 - Gilbert)	★		★	★				43%
Frank Pratt (LD 8 - Pinal County)	★		★	★				43%
Rebecca Rios (LD 27 - South Phoenix)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Tony Rivero (LD 21 - Peoria, Sun City)	★		★	★	★			57%
Bob Robson (LD 18 - Ahwatukee, Chandler, S Tempe)	★	★	★	★		★	NV	83%
Macario Saldate, IV (LD 3 - West Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Andrew Sherwood (LD 26 - Tempe)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
T.J. Shope (LD 8 - Pinal County)	★		★	★				43%
Victoria Steele (LD 9 - Midtown Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
David W. Stevens (LD 14 - Southeast Arizona)	★		★	★				43%
Bob Thorpe (LD 6 - Sedona, Flagstaff, Snowflake)	★		★	★				43%
Kelly Townsend (LD 16 - Apache Junction, East Mesa)	★		★	★	★			57%
Michelle Ugenti (LD 23 - Scottsdale, Fountain Hills)	★		★	NV		NV		40%
Ceci Velasquez (LD 29 - West Phoenix, Glendale)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%
Jeff Weninger (LD 17 - Chandler)	★		★	★				43%
Bruce Wheeler (LD 10 - East, Central Tucson)	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	100%

★ = a vote for kids

blank = no vote for kids

NV = not voting or absent

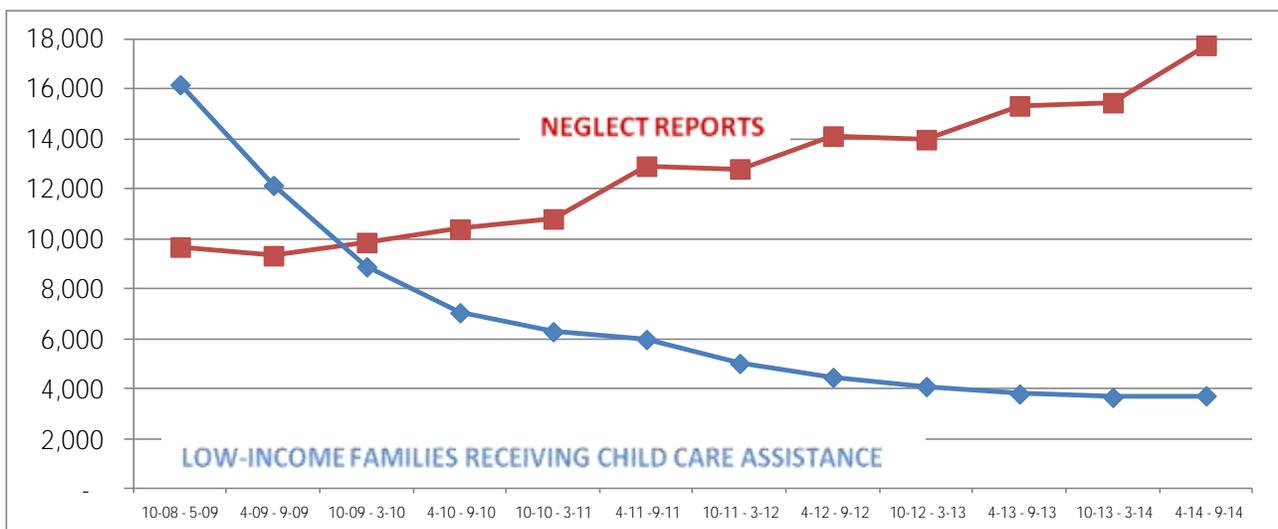
# Without Family Supports, Child Neglect Will Rise

Early in this legislative session, many state lawmakers grilled Charles Flanagan, who was then the Director of the Department of Child Safety, about why reports of child neglect are still going up. They pointed fingers and made speeches about how important it is to protect child safety and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Then 32 lawmakers in the House and 16 in the Senate voted yes on a state budget (SB 1469) signed by Governor Ducey that is guaranteed to drive up child neglect. The budget cuts safe and affordable child care, leaving children in dangerous and unstable situations when their parents go to work. It cuts cash assistance **for the poorest mothers and children, putting more children at risk for neglect because their parents can't** provide basic food, shelter, and supervision. It cuts payments to health care providers, limiting access to acute medical care and behavioral health services. It cuts funding for school counselors and nurses as well as school and community strategies to prevent mental health crises. It sweeps funds for housing assistance and treatment for children.

Lawmakers who voted for the budget will have no one to blame but themselves when child neglect reports rise, the child safety case backlog grows higher, and the expense and trauma of foster care expand with no improvements in child safety.

BUDGET CUTS TO CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE ACCOMPANIED BY SKYROCKETING GROWTH IN REPORTS OF CHILD NEGLECT



**Children's Action Alliance (CAA) is an independent voice for Arizona children at the state capitol and in the community. CAA works to improve children's health, education and security through information and action.**

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