

Minutes of December 6, 2021, Meeting
Indivisible Tucson Action Alliance

The meeting was called to order by Chair Dana Offerman at 3:34 p.m. There were 37 people present.

After welcoming all in attendance, Dana introduced the guest speaker, Adrian Fontes, a Democratic candidate for Secretary of State. Mr. Fontes is a native of Nogales, Arizona, went to Arizona State University for his bachelor's degree and to Strum College of Law at the University of Denver for his law degree. He also served in the United States Marine Corps. His ancestors were in Arizona with Father Kino, and his grandfather was mayor of Nogales. Mr. Fontes served as Maricopa County Recorder from January 1, 2017, until December 31, 2020.

Mr. Fontes said that he was inspired to run for Maricopa County Recorder because of the difficult time Maricopa County voters had getting to vote in 2016. During his tenure, Mr. Fontes established programs to register more voters and to increase the number of polling places in the county. He also offered his assistance to Pima County Recorder Gabriella Cázares-Kelly when she first took office. While he was Maricopa County Recorder, there was an increase of 500,000 voters in the county, and 600,000 more people in the county voted in the 2020 election than had ever voted before. One of the things he wants to do as Secretary of State is increase the number of voters in rural areas and smaller counties of the state.

Mr. Fontes expressed his concern about the spread of misinformation by "neofascists" in this country and the resultant distrust in our elections. He believes we must establish a system of predictable and elections to preserve our democracy. He does not, however, believe that authoritarianism will prevail in 2022.

Mr. Fontes did note that former President Trump and his allies are targeting Secretary of State races in key states to control elections in the future. Mr. Fontes believes Mr. Trump does not want elections to be run with integrity. He congratulated Indivisible for its action in working for elections with integrity.

It is Mr. Fontes' belief that he can win the Secretary of State race because of his state-wide contacts and appeal. He believes it is necessary to have state-wide appeal to beat Mark Finchem who is endorsed by Trump. Mr. Fontes is bi-lingual and believes this is an asset. He notes that he has the highest rating that can be achieved by a person working in voter registration. He wants to work with the state legislature as he worked with the Board of Supervisors in Maricopa County.

Mr. Fontes participated in a question-and-answer session. These questions and answers are as follows:

1. How would you increase voting in rural areas and tribal areas? He would visit those areas and ask how he could help.
2. What Democrats have endorsed your candidacy? The Latino Victory Fund and some unions. His opponent is in the Minority Leader of the Arizona House of

Representatives so many people need his support to get key projects through the legislature, in Mr. Fontes' assessment.

3. Why did the Democratic party in Pima County lose 1500 people and the Republicans gain 3000? The Democratic party needs to show people that they care about programs that matter to people rather than using rhetoric and that the party doesn't take them for granted. Voting rights and increasing voting accessibility are examples of what matters to people.
4. How do we assure that tribal members and rural areas get access to voting if we use Voting Centers rather than traditional precinct voting and are Voting Centers secure? Mr. Fontes is an advocate for Voting Centers. He says that the number of provisional ballots is reduced with Voting Centers (noting that Maricopa County which used Voting Centers had fewer provisional ballots than Pima County in 2020) and allows for more early voting places. People have flexibility in the where they can vote with Voting Centers, and these can be open for 27 days before the election. He indicated that Pima County Recorder Càzares-Kelly is concerned about getting Voting Centers in rural and tribal areas in Pima County.
5. How do you win over people who believe in the "big lie" and think you are part of the deep state? Mr. Fontes believes that there are fewer people who are supportive of former President Trump than there used to be, but that they have become more intense. We need to reach people who are on the fence or who have dropped out of the voting process because they think voting is not worth it. We need to get these groups to vote.
6. What concerns do you have about death threats to election workers? Mr. Fontes believes we need strong laws to protect election workers and to deter people from making threats to election workers. We also need strong candidates to ensure the laws are enforced.
7. How can we change the message about the Democratic Party, so the emphasis is on the good things we do and not on socialism and inflation? Mr. Fontes believes we are losing our base, and to get them back we need to emphasize traditional family values that are supported by Democratic programs. He cited, as an example of a former base, Latino men who see themselves as the protectors and providers for their families and who are not getting the message that Democratic programs, such as health care and jobs, are the programs that support families. Democrats need to be realistic and to speak to Arizonans on terms that resonate with Arizonans.

When the question-and-answer session was completed, Dana thanked Mr. Fontes for addressing us. He gave us his election website, electfontes.com, and then left for another appointment.

Redistricting: Dana announced that there was an Independent Redistricting hearing in Tucson on December 4, 2021. She also announced that the State Redistricting Team will have the chair of the 2011 Redistricting Commission speak at its meeting on December 7, 2021. The speaker will address how we can still influence the maps that are adopted. She then asked Misty Atkins to talk in more detail about the December 4 hearing.

Misty began by acknowledging the many ITAA members who attended the meeting and the excellent comments given by Jackie Marshall. Misty pointed out that there were many

remarks about the skewed map that has LD 17 stretching across the Catalina Mountains and that was proposed by the Southern Arizona Leadership Council (“SALC”) As Misty said, the LD 17 proposed on this map is a classic case of gerrymandering.

Presently 24 of the 30 legislative districts are solidly for either Republicans or Democrats and only 6 are competitive. The IRC hopes to adopt final maps by December 22.

Shanna Leonard reported that the Democratic party hopes to have an analysis of all the comments from public members to give to the IRC. She asked for help in this project. ssl@shannaleonard.net.

Misty said that the window for public comment for the IRC is closed. However, the public can still comment by logging onto to the *live* meetings and make comments during the meetings. (Which are at 9:00 am.) For those who can watch some or all of the meetings in order to submit a comment, this is the access link: <https://irc.az.gov/public-meetings/final-decision-meetings-december> She suggested that they oppose Map 10.0 which is the map proposed by the SALC and support Map 9.0, proposed by committee member Lerner. Training on how to contact the IRC and possible comments can be found at <https://www.mobilize.us/azcd8indivisible/event/373337/>

State Team: Eileen Hollowell noted that the legislature will go into session on January 10. Because many legislative propositions in the last session were declared unconstitutional for being combined in the budget bill, it is likely they will be re-introduced individually this session. It is very important that ITAA members use the Request to Speak platform and that they add comments. We need to let the Republican members of the legislature know that their actions are not acceptable and support the Democratic members of LD9. She will be doing a training session on RTS, probably by Zoom. She may also have meetings where members of the state team can support each other in commenting on RTS. In addition, there may be a push to speak in person or by Zoom to the legislature.

Nominations: Dana announced that under our procedures, nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair are to be made in December with elections in January. Eileen Hollowell nominated Dana Offerman for Chair and Margo Nichols for Vice-Chair. Those nominations were seconded. There were no other nominations. Elections will be in January.

New committee: Dana announced that we are forming an outreach committee to work with other progressive organizations. The new committee will be meeting in January. If you are interested in serving on this committee, email Dana at indivisible.tucson@gmail.com

Report from Tricia Sauer, State Indivisible leader: Tricia announced that there would be a happy hour with the legislative group at the Doubletree in Tucson on Thursday, December 9. You can find details on <https://secure.everyaction.com/xYesmD2ymEWXgA3u7xH-kQ2?fbclid=IwAR125zs0b-94Lmcm3bC92KJltPatF83iwKSF4qfeLSvVIHHIEgwzeyzc6-E>

Tricia also that the Build Back Better vote is expected to be voted on the week of December 20. Only Manchin from West Virginia is holding out on the Democratic side. A vote on the Protect Democracy Act is expected on December 9. After we know what the legislative districts will be, the state organization will organize teams for the issues and legislative districts for 2022. The national organization may be asking us if we want specific candidates endorsed.

Closing announcements: Dana discussed the successful brainstorming meeting on November 17. Some of the ideas generated at that meeting will be included in the plan for the year that the Steering Committee will prepare and present to the membership. One idea is a membership challenge. A menu of activities will be presented to members in a survey and each member will be challenged to participate in at least one activity from that menu that he or she feels comfortable doing each month.

Dana recognize the efforts ITAA members over the past time of ITAA's existence. She quoted from Heather Cox Richardson's column on December 5, 2021, in which Ms. Richardson quoted Laura Thornton, director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Ms. Thornton reminded us that to stop the march of authoritarianism, "it is up to us, the people. No party or leader will save us here. No foreign leader will shake us out of our stupor. Americans need caring about democracy enough to act on it...Apathy is how democracies die. I've seen it".

Dana thanked the group for what the members have done and will do. She emphasized the importance of the Secretary of State's office for voting protection.

Jan Counts reminded us that there would be many training opportunities starting in January as groups such as Field Team 6, NextGen and Mission for Arizona and to visit the website to see those opportunities.

Dana asked that members email her if they have ideas for speakers for our meetings. She also said that we are exploring ideas for in person meetings (either outdoor or indoor) and hybrid meetings. Margo Nichols has a camera that can be used for hybrid meetings. We also may have another happy hour such as the one at Karen Harris' house previously.

Our next meeting will be January 10, rather than January 3.