

## ITAA January 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

Dana mentioned that today was the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the shooting of Gabby Giffords and 17 others at a Meet Your Congressperson event in front of a Safeway store in Tucson. Six people were killed at this event including 9-year-old Christina-Taylor Green, who would have been 22 years old today. We need our hearts and anger to sustain us in the work we do at Indivisible.

### Guest Speaker - Kevin Volk

Jan Counts introduced our guest speaker, Kevin Volk, candidate for the Arizona House of Representatives in Legislative District 17. Kevin was born and raised in Tucson. He attended Salpointe High School and Brown University where he graduated *magna cum laude* with a degree in Economics. Following college, he served as a 5th grade public school teacher in the East Side of San Jose, California; interned for Representative Gabby Giffords taking in constituent communication in Congress; worked as an English language educator in Mexico, and helped former Governor Tim Kaine's campaign for Senate in Virginia. For the last ten years he has worked as a commercial real estate broker.

Republicans have a narrow majority in the Arizona legislature and Kevin expressed that he is tired with all the gridlock in the legislature. The two Republican LD 17 representatives are too extreme and not serious about solving problems for their constituents. Kevin cares most about education, full funding of public schools, a secure water future since Arizona is in a water crisis, cost of living, reproductive freedom, affordable housing development, and reduced revenue from the Arizona flat tax. He believes that with less tax revenue, tax dollars need to go where they are most needed. His focus is not participating solely on "culture wars" but rather on what affects the lives of Arizonans.

He is excited to be running for office now because of the slim Republican margin in the Arizona legislature. He noted that 99% of bills introduced in the Arizona legislature by Democrats were rejected. Republicans have controlled the Arizona legislature since 1966. He spent today meeting with other representatives in the Arizona legislature. His campaign kicked off this past Saturday which was well-attended by volunteers. He plans an extensive grassroots campaign targeting 80,000 voters and he plans to knock on 10,000 doors. Since the district is geographically diverse and he believes that he will make the most impact by talking one-on-one with voters, he has no town hall meetings planned at the present time. LD17 is a large legislative district (57,000 independent voters live in LD17) so his campaign will do direct mail, digital ads, and some radio advertising. He stated that he needs name recognition and persuasion to win. He calls the LD17 race a "down ballot" race that will require deep canvassing to have a chance of winning. He mentioned that Arizona is one of the top states in the country for ticket splitting and that Katie Hobbs and Mark Kelly both won LD17 in the last election. He also mentioned that LD17 is pretty evenly divided politically but the current legislative representatives are very extreme. You can find more information on Kevin Volk at

[www.kevinvolkaz.com](http://www.kevinvolkaz.com). His email address is [Kevin@kevinvolkaz.com](mailto:Kevin@kevinvolkaz.com). You can sign his petition to be sure that he gets on the ballot at <https://apps.azsos.gov/equal/>.

### **State Team - Joe Alexander**

Joe Alexander discussed legislative issues and how ITAA members can weigh in on pending legislation. The team held its first meeting on December 11 and decided to prioritize the vulnerabilities of ineffective and counterproductive legislators and the strengths of progressive incumbents and new candidates for office.

The team encourages ITAA members to use all of the tools that are available, including postcards (especially important for reaching young voters), LTEs, Request to Speak (RTS), the Civic Engagement Beyond Voting (CEBV), the Melinda Iyer CEBV Report, and calls to legislators to help us get through the 2024 legislative session and lay the groundwork for the 2024 elections.

Cathy Sigmon from CEBV spoke at the December 11 meeting and indicated that the 2024 Arizona legislative session will involve the same people, with little turnover, and will remain extremist in character. However, Democrats in safe legislative districts can afford to be bolder, and we should encourage that. CEBV will be looking past the 2024 legislative session to the November 2024 election and paying attention to talking points that are relevant for the election contests. We need to be careful about what issues to ignore; that is, don't waste energy on likely losers. CEBV does not urge people to sign up for live testimony to legislative committees, after many unpleasant experiences last year. However, people are encouraged to use RTS and make calls to legislators. Watch for CEBV *Calls to Action* and be prepared to speak up by contacting legislators. We can expect many of the bills from last year to be introduced again. We need to be especially watchful about *ballot referrals*, which are resolutions (SCRs or HCRs) that can bypass the Governor and be enacted. These ballot referrals can be very dangerous.

The Arizona budget will be a mess this year. Due to a likely \$400 million revenue shortfall and an ESA voucher funding shortfall, the Arizona budget will probably have a total shortfall of ~\$700 million. CEBV will be paying attention to (a) county races, including Boards of Supervisors and County Recorders, (b) engaging young voters and students, e.g. on school boards, and (c) Gavel Watch as a vehicle to identify poor-performing judges. Cathy encouraged everyone to join the CEBV Zoom Happy Hours every Sunday at 4 PM. At 5 p.m. after the Happy Hour, they do RTS training.

For information on signing up for Request to Speak, see <https://www.cebv.us/rts.html>.

The Arizona legislative timeline is as follows:

- Monday, 2/5 Bill introduction deadline.
- Friday, 2/16 Last day for a bill to get out of committees in its originating house.
- Friday, 3/22 Last day for a bill to get out of committees in its crossover house (and the last day to use RTS until a budget drops).

Marcelino Quinonez (Democrat from LD11) indicated that at the December 11 meeting that with a slim 2-seat margin in both houses, Democrats need to find two Republicans to get anything passed. RTS is very beneficial. So are emails to legislators and in-person visits.

The State Team will meet next on January 15 at 3:30 p.m. via Zoom. Joe believes that we may have less “craziness” in the legislature this year because there were so many vetoes in 2023 and legislators want to get out and campaign. The state budget is the number one issue and water, education, and public housing also remain important issues. Joe suggests that ITAA members sign up for an RTS account if you have not already done so and get training through CEBV on how to use it.

### **Postcard Team - Cindy Bordelon**

Our next postcard campaign will be in mid-to-late January for CD 6. We have ordered 500 names/addresses from FT6 and should be getting those soon so that we can distribute postcards to the postcard team. Other ITAA campaigns will focus on reproductive freedom, climate change, and democracy. Cindy asked for more member donations to fund the printing of the postcards so that we can expand our reach for future ITAA postcard campaigns. Please let Dana know if you would like to volunteer to write postcards. You can reach Cindy at [cleebordelon2012@gmail.com](mailto:cleebordelon2012@gmail.com).

### **Treasurer’s Report - Jeanne Hardie**

Jeanne reported that under Arizona law, donations made to Act Blue for ITAA efforts are considered restricted funds under 501(c)(3) and cannot be used for certain political activities. ITAA members can make donations to ITAA through Act Blue at [indivisibletucson.org](http://indivisibletucson.org). The donate link is at the bottom of the page. If you interested in a cash donation to our unrestricted account, please contact Jeanne at [ferrebeed001@gmail.com](mailto:ferrebeed001@gmail.com).

Funding for ITAA postcards, where we refer to Democrat candidates and priorities, come from ITAA non-restricted funds. ITAA will be collecting cash donations at future in-person events, such as the upcoming Happy Hour on January 18, to fund postcards. ITAA will look into opening a checking account so we can collect donations via check. ITAA has \$3,117 in restricted funds and \$175 in non-restricted funds. You can donate to our ActBlue account at our website: [www.indivisibletucson.org](http://www.indivisibletucson.org).

### **Presidential Preference Primary - Karen Harris**

The Presidential Preference Primary In Arizona will be held on March 19. You are only eligible to vote in this primary if you are registered to vote as a Democrat or a Republican by February 12. Early voting begins on February 21 only if you are registered to vote as a Democrat or Republican. These restrictions as to registration of party affiliation only apply to the Presidential Preference Primary and not the general election.

Some members are seeing petitions circulating for “open primaries” and “ranked choice ballots.” The “open primaries” efforts are being spearheaded by Make Elections Fair Arizona. The “ranked choice ballot” efforts are being spearheaded by Voter Choice Arizona.

## **Ciscomani Accountability Efforts - Kathleen Mayer**

There was a good turnout for the January 6 rally at Ciscomani's office. Juan Ciscomani is a Republican representative in Congressional District 6 that was won by Joe Biden. Ciscomani is not who he claims he is and has voted for the MAGA agenda all the time. Ciscomani is not in favor of reproductive freedom which has alienated young voters. Kathleen's team is doing text banking in conjunction with Cindy's postcard team. Training for text banking will occur on Thursday, January 11 at 3 p.m. MT. Text banking training will be held every Thursday from 3 to 4 p.m.

Kathleen is meeting with a private group of Democrats in Casa Grande in Ciscomani's district on January 17. She had a successful meeting with Democrats in Graham County who want to do their own postcard campaign. This group is having funding issues and is accepting donations through Act Blue. You can contact Kathleen at [kmayer17@gmail.com](mailto:kmayer17@gmail.com).

Honest Arizona will be meeting at the Ren Coffee House in St. Philip's Plaza at 10 a.m. on Friday where you can buy a small comical book on how Ciscomani has voted.

## **Abortion Access Amendment**

Di Alexander and Tina Kilcullen are continuing to organize the collecting of signatures for the AAA. Mobilize has a list of petition training and signing events. Arizona Indivisible has reported good outcomes on how many signatures are valid. Di Alexander is at Beyond Bread at Ina and Oracle Roads every Monday from 9 to 10 a.m. to collect and notarize petitions.

## **Next Get Together**

We will continue to schedule get togethers that will combine information, training and activities along with socializing. Our next one will be **Thursday, January 18 at 3:00 at the Oro Valley Library**. Kathleen will talk about the legislative process in the Arizona Senate and House. After her presentation and discussion, we'll reconvene at Noble Hops at **4:30 p.m.** for appetizers (which we can pay for) and beverages (on your own).

## **Next ITAA Meeting**

The next ITAA meeting will be held via Zoom on Monday, February 5 at 3:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be Rex Scott, Pima County Supervisor for District 1.