

Minutes – Indivisible Tucson Action Alliance Membership Meeting

Monday April 7, 2025

The meeting was facilitated by Jeanne and Ruby. Minutes were taken by Margrit.

OUTLINE

1. Address to the membership from Dana Offerman, outgoing Chair.
2. Report from the Event Coordinator, Amy.
3. Presentation on engaging young voters, by Ethan Rigel, campaign manager, community organizer, and LD17 precinct committee person.
4. Presentation by Kevin Volk, State Senator for LD17.
5. State Team Report from Marlene.
6. Un-representative Ciscomani Team Report from Paula.
7. Treasurer's Report from Jeanne.
8. Letters to the Editor Team Report from Jackie.
9. Membership Team report from Ruby and Deena.

The next Monthly Membership meeting will be May 5, time TBA. An announcement and invitation to register for the zoom meeting will go out about a week beforehand.

The plain-text file of the chat session associated with this meeting is attached to this email.

DETAILS

1. Dana's Address:

Jeanne began the meeting by inviting the outgoing Chair of Indivisible Tucson, Dana Offerman, to address the group.

Dana spoke to us about the founding of the group in 2017, and about the successes the group has had since then, in spite of the election of Trump 2.0 in 2024. Biden won Arizona in 2020, and Arizona passed Prop 139, protecting abortion rights, and the Voters' Right To Know (Prop 211) fighting dark money in our elections. She reminded us that it is important to hold on to these successes in these dark times.

Dana then spoke about the importance of not letting ideological purity divide us. We're going to have differences, but we can't let that sidetrack us from the critical work that needs to be done now. In order to be successful, we need to set aside our differences, and form a strong community -- a community that brings people together, and where we support each other.

This unity was on display on April 5 on 22nd street, where people came together from a wide variety of viewpoints and with many different issues to unite with one voice saying Hands Off!

Dana noted the explosive growth this group has seen, and she thanked the new steering committee for stepping up to take over -- at a very challenging time. She finished by saying that as long as we persist, as long as we stay together as a group and as a community, she does think that we will ultimately defeat Trumpism.

[Dana's full remarks are attached as a pdf -- they are important and well worth reading in their entirety.]

2. Report from the Event Coordinator, Amy. She spoke about the Apr. 5 event, where there were between 10,000 and 15,000 demonstrators. Upcoming events:

Upcoming events:

- Fri. Apr. 11 noon: at the VA -- 3601 S 6th Ave, Tucson, AZ 85713.
- Sat. Apr. 12, 8:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Tesla Protest, River & Oracle.
- Tue. Apr. 15, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. Honest Arizona in front of Ciscomani's office, 1636 N Swan Road.
- Thu. Apr. 17, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. LD18 Democrats at Ciscomani's office, 1636 N Swan Road.

Best way to keep abreast of events is the "Take Action Tucson" compilation --

<https://linktr.ee/takeactiontucson>

-- also the ITAA website events page <https://www.indivisibletucson.org/itaa-events.html>

3. Presentation by Ethan Rigel [pronounced "Regal"].

Ethan is a campaign manager, a community organizer, and a LD17 precinct committee person. His presentation is about engaging young voters: a new approach for the post-2024 election. Most recently he directed a project that knocked on over 450,000 doors in concert with the League of Conservation Voters throughout Arizona. Also worked on voter registration, and is working on campaigns for young progressive candidates.

Young voters are considered to be those ages 18 - 34.

In 2024, the nationwide youth voter turnout was down 8%, young voters were 9% more likely to identify as Republican, and the top issue at 64% is the rising cost of living (esp.

housing). 44% of non-voters disliked both candidates. 48% w/out college exp. were never contacted about voting in 2024. 76% feel like they don't have a political community.

What can we do?

1. Engage, using various methods to find and talk to young voters. Make our message digestible.
2. Door-to-door and face to face conversations are the most effective. Also tabling and attending events, so we need to find or even host events that young people want to attend. Free food can be a draw! And try to make it fun!
3. Relational organizing -- talk to family friends and encourage them to connect with their own networks.

We need to interact with young people during the off-cycle (THAT IS NOW!) not just when we need their votes. Protests on the streets are great. Now is the time to reach out and build our coalitions.

Engage working youth

- * set up voter registration and education tables at non-traditional schools - there's quite a few in Tucson
- * community college
- * plan a high school registration drive - League of Women Voters
- * use data-driven door knocking strategies to reach low-propensity voters.
- * partner with small businesses

Involve young people

- * give them a seat at the table and an opportunity to take on more responsibility
- * plan youth-focused events
- * partner with youth-focused organizations

Social Media & Digital Advocacy - using the ever-changing landscape to effectively reach young people.

- * Craft a social media plan
- * Crowd-source content creation esp. photos.
- * Collaborate digitally with other organizations.

- * Highlight how your group is taking real action to address a problem.
- * Republicans were really good at getting on niche podcasts.
- * Get to know people and find out what THEY want to talk about.

Actions

- * Host voter registration drives on campus
- * Attend town halls, city council, or LD meetings and apply to be a Precinct Chairperson within your LD
- * Request elected officials to speak.
- * Support young local candidates or run yourself.
- * Post events by young people, for young people.

Conclusion

- * Sharpen our messaging by focusing on important core issues -- then diversify our avenues of approach.
- * Listen, engage, and act -- don't assume support.
- * Young voters demand bold solutions, not just promises.
- * Give young people a space and the resources they need to implement their ideas within your own Group.
- * Sustained engagement is incredibly important, not just last-minute mobilization.
- * Reach out time and time again to really connect. They want action -- let's give them a reason to show up!

Email Ethan [emrigel@gmail.com]

4. Presentation by Kevin Volk, State Senator for LD17.

Kevin Volk was introduced by Joe Alexander, one of our State Team leads. Joe started by asking Kevin,

- What can we do as voters to make an impact on the State Legislature?
- What actions should we be taking if we want to have a positive impact?

- What should we be supporting, and what should we be opposing?
- And finally, how is the legislature dealing with the possibility of serious Federal budget cuts to the state, particularly Medicaid?

Kevin:

- Committees are over now. No new bills.
- Voted on over 450 bills. That part of it is over. Some voting on existing bills over the next few weeks, but no new bills.
- Attention turns now to the budget.
- This is a fully Republican-controlled legislature. Some people think that because we have a Democratic Governor (and Attorney General and Secretary of State) that Democrats are in control of the Legislature -- it's the opposite! Republicans control the speakership, they control the chairs of the committees, they control everything about the agenda.

Kevin was disappointed that there was no meaningful progress on state water issues, nothing on common sense gun safety reforms, nothing on reforming the ESA voucher program, which is now hitting a billion dollars, and is competing for funds against public schools.

What you CAN do -- there's always something you CAN do! There's no silver bullet, something that's going to fix everything, but everything you do can have a chance of being impactful.

- * Emails to state legislators, especially Republicans on some of these issues,
- * Phone calls to state legislators
- * Post cards that are personalized (i.e., not pre-printed)
- * Posting your thoughts on social media, especially if it is something you have personal experience on.
- * Making someone you connect with on social media think twice about their support for Republicans or their policies.
- * Just put it out there!

Mismanagement from the Trump administration: ask, is this the best way to do this? Even if you think the answer is obvious, ask anyway, get people thinking. There are winnable folks out there. Remind Republican state legislators that it is not their job to do everything your party leader Donald Trump does. In fact your actual job is to protect Arizonans.

Education: Prop 123 is a critical bill for education. Need to pay teachers more but not at the expense of the other staff.

Federal funding: Arizona is one of the top ten "receiver states" meaning we receive a lot of federal money relative to the state's own tax revenue. We have no idea what Trump is going to do from one day to the next, so we have to plan for a system as usual. The state legislature may then need to reconvene in a special session if cuts come from Congress.

When communicating with your state legislators, keep it simple and focused on one issue, and try not to engage in personal criticism and name-calling -- stick to the issue. Much more effective. Maybe you can illustrate an example of the effects or potential effects of a policy in a way that a member might not have thought of, that has the best chance of changing minds.

ESA voucher spending is crowding out other funding needs, such as the need for supplemental funding for disabled Arizonans, road projects, state troopers, public education, water investments, housing affordability. ESA vouchers - no accountability to the voters. Whatever you want spending to go to -- explain that the ESA vouchers are going to the rich and private schools.

Even if the main session is over, still keep talking about your priorities. Why aren't we reforming the ESA voucher program? Water issues? Common sense gun safety? keep talking -- especially in contrast to the ESA vouchers.

We have Republican legislators who serve very rural districts where the only schools are public schools. So why are they supporting something that has been proven to take money out of the public school system that is serving their constituents?

The one most effective thing you can do, if you are able, is to try to testify in person in a committee hearing on a bill that has some relevance to you personally, whether it would affect you personally, or does affect your personally, or it affects people you know or work with or serve with. Sometimes with a bill there's no one speaking in person, either for or against. So next year's session, plan on a "Stay-cation" up to Phoenix!

ESA voucher system completely unaccountable and indefensible. Even if you don't have kids, or your kids are not in the system any more - you're still paying taxes to support the ESA voucher system -- and do you want it to be going to Paradise Valley and Scottsdale families for private schools or do you want it to go into our constitutionally required public education system which is the great equalizer as it should be?

5. State Team Report from Marlene

We encourage our membership to call and email state legislators; rely on info from CEBV and from e.g. the Sierra Club. A lot of what Kevin said just now was reiterated by Priya Sundareshan, State Senator for LD18 who came to our in-person meeting at Ft Lowell Park -- call and email your state legislators! Tell them what's on your mind!

6. Un-representative Ciscomani Team Report from Paula.

Ideas from today's meeting (earlier today, before THIS meeting):

- candidate forums for challengers (this subgroup meets again in 1 week)
- call a Town Hall - even if Ciscomani won't come, maybe some of his challengers can show up and say what they would do differently.
- Also subgroup working on how Ciscomani is actually voting -- what is his record.
- important facts about Ciscomani being coalesced into images and nicknames -- get the information out.

This team will meet again in two weeks, email Paula to join: paularmh@proton.me

More detailed minutes from today's meeting will be included in the Sunday Announcements email.

7. Treasurer's Report from Jeanne

This month we received \$1,468 through our Act Blue portal!!!!

Distributed funds now: \$5,520

Unrestricted funds: \$561

Events, Zoom account, planning future events. If people have ideas about group events in person, Indivisible does matching funds, we can provide food and refreshments, except not alcohol, and not partisan political activity. Thank you all for your support!!

8. Letters to the Editor Team Report from Jackie

We have had over 40 letters to the editor published, we have a team of 96 members, including 10 writers, 15 submitters. From the in person meeting at Ft Lowell Park, we now have a volunteer to lead the Postcards team, Shari Plapp <scrap.stamp.teach@gmail.com>

At the Hands Off protest, the Democrats of Oro Valley who had purchased thousands of "Democracy Matters" bumper stickers, we gave out 500 bumper stickers at Hands Off. People do know the big picture! These bumper stickers will remind everyone, every day, everywhere you go, not just for the next two years or the next four years, but forever, that Democracy Matters!

To join the LTE team email Jackie at jacolyn@comcast.net.

9. Membership Team report from Ruby and Deena

We are working hard to connect everyone to the issues and teams they are interested in, so if you are thinking, I said I was interested in this and this, why has no one contacted me? Please be patient because we are trying to make those connections as best we can. Deena spoke briefly about the in-person meeting we just had in Ft Lowell Park on the 30th. 72 participants. Small groups formed to get business done, based on interest. Very enthusiastic participation. Proposal sent to steering committee: to have a Boycott Team. If people are interested in forming a youth engagement committee, let us know, we will do our best to make it happen!

Next Monthly Membership meeting will be May 5, time TBA.

Next in-person meeting -- we will let you know when we set that up!

Q&A

One topic highlighted was the need for good sources of information -- where should we be getting our news and where should we be placing our focus. This is a great topic and we consistently find that in the ITAA interest survey, "Seek out factual independent media news sources" is a top vote-getter. Stay tuned for a page of resources on this on the website.

[Additional note from Margrit – it is important to break outside the bubble of your usual contacts, but this can also be difficult to do. One way to do this is to join a club or have a hobby that is NOT centered around politics, like geocaching, or playing pickleball. You might get to mix with people you usually wouldn't mix with. Then gently introduce topics that have a bearing on that hobby or activity, in an issue-oriented, non-partisan way.]