

The Arizona Voters' Agenda

Centering the Priorities of Voters in Elections to Achieve The Arizona We Want

To elect leaders aligned to their priorities, Arizonans deserve the opportunity to decide who to vote for based on knowing where candidates stand on the issues they deem most important to the state's future.

Center for the Future of Arizona (CFA) developed the Arizona Voters' Agenda from new survey research of Republican, Democratic, and independent/unaffiliated voters of all ages. The results of two public opinion surveys show likely voters' views on the 2022 midterm election, priorities for the state, and what they want to hear from candidates. The findings also inform a data-driven guide to policy items and value statements the majority of voters across political affiliations and age groups agree with most as the critical issues facing the state.

CFA is bringing awareness to the findings to put the voices of Arizona voters at the forefront, get candidates and the media to focus election discussions on what Arizonans agree on and care about for our state, and encourage leaders to increase voter engagement by building a positive agenda for our state that focuses on solutions desired by Arizonans across age, region, and political affiliation. The initiative builds on CFA's longstanding research efforts to identify what matters most to Arizonans and put their voices at the forefront of decision-making across the state.

Arizona Voters' Agenda

KEY INSIGHTS

- Nearly two-thirds of all likely voters say the top factor in selecting a candidate is “position on the issues” or “has clear plans or solutions.”
- Nearly two-thirds of voters prefer candidates who are willing to compromise and work across the aisle to get things done.
- Despite polarized political dialogue, there is significant agreement on top issues, including immigration, economy & state spending, education, water & environment, housing affordability and election reform.
- Likely voters believe elections are fair, secure, and accurate.

Priorities By Topic

Education

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Ensuring that Arizona schools have quality teachers and principals.	89%	97%
Expanding career and technical education opportunities.	78%	97%
Increasing teacher pay.	72%	88%
Increasing the number of Arizona students who pursue and complete education or training beyond high school (including university, community college or technical/trade school).	70%	94%
Increasing funding for K-12 public education.	65%	82%
Reducing financial barriers for students going to college.	58%	80%
Closing gaps in educational outcomes for vulnerable populations, including low-income, those with disabilities, and English language learners.	58%	83%
Increasing access and affordability of early learning for 3 and 4-year-olds.	52%	78%

Value Statements	Strongly Support	Strongly Support
Every school should have the resources necessary to deliver quality education that prepares every child for the future, no matter their skin color, background, or zip code.	88%	97%
Closing achievement gaps among our students is important to ensuring our state can produce the skilled workforce necessary for a strong economic future for Arizona.	61%	86%

Education Forward Arizona conducted an additional poll to gain deeper insights into the priorities of likely Arizona voters on education, recognizing education is consistently one of the top issues for Arizonans. Learn more at educationforwardarizona.org/priorities.

Economy, Inflation & State Spending

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Supporting Arizona's long-term economic growth.	76%	95%
Addressing inflation.	75%	92%
Addressing rising costs.	69%	88%
Reducing gas prices.	69%	87%
Increasing housing affordability.	68%	88%
Increasing job creation and business investment.	67%	92%

Value Statements	Strongly Support	Total Support
To keep up with growth, we need to make ongoing investments in education, our transportation system, public safety, and other critical infrastructure.	61%	89%
In regards to Arizona's budget surplus: Instead of continuing to cut taxes, we should be increasing funding for education, public safety, roads, and other critical investments that will boost our long-term economic growth.	54%	82%
When you compare Arizona to other states across the country, our tax burden is relatively low. Everyone should pay their fair share of taxes to ensure that the state can continue to meet its core obligations.	51%	84%

Water & Environment

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Securing Arizona's water future and addressing our long-term drought.	83%	95%
Preserving and protecting Arizona's rivers, natural areas, and wildlife.	80%	96%
Increasing investments and measures to prevent forest fires on state land.	71%	93%
Improving air quality.	62%	88%
Investing available funding to address environmental and water issues, including drought resiliency, clean air, energy improvement in rural areas, electric grid resiliency, and forest fires.	55%	85%

Value Statements	Strongly Support	Total Support
We need to do something to protect our water future and secure our long-term water supplies.	74%	94%
We must support sustainable practices that protect our air, land, and water, and foster a high quality of life for all.	65%	90%

Elections

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Ensuring that all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, have the same signature requirements to qualify for a particular elected office.	67%	87%
Offering early in-person voting over multiple weeks leading up to Election Day.	55%	74%

Value Statement	Strongly Support	Total Support
We can do more to secure our elections system and protect it from outside interference and fraudulent voting. At the same time, we must make sure that it remains easy to vote – and not create barriers to participation that disproportionately hurt certain communities.	61%	87%

Immigration

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Creating a functioning border for commerce and immigration.	64%	87%
Creating a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and dreamers who were brought to Arizona as children.	61%	83%
Enacting comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship.	60%	81%

Value Statement	Strongly Support	Total Support
Immigration reform will ultimately strengthen the country. Mexico is Arizona's largest trading partner; we need to get serious about supporting comprehensive immigration reform because it will strengthen our economy and promote border security.	53%	81%

Housing Affordability & Homelessness

Policy Items	Strongly Support	Total Support
Increasing housing affordability.	68%	88%
Encouraging workforce housing options for essential workers such as firefighters, police officers, teachers, and healthcare staff	51%	78%
Encouraging apartment developers to dedicate a few available units to families who qualify for housing assistance	51%	78%
Value Statements	Strongly Support	Total Support
House prices and rental rates are out of control. Many essential workers are not able to afford housing in the communities they serve.	60%	80%
Landlords should not be allowed to keep a person out of housing based on how they pay for it - whether using their own funds or housing assistance.	59%	78%
Arizona must do more to make sure that housing options are affordable and available to middle- and low-income earners throughout the state.	57%	79%
State and local government have a role to play in making sure people who experience homelessness can access safe, affordable housing.	52%	83%

What Makes the Agenda?

The Arizona Voters' Agenda is built on where a majority of likely voters across political and age groups agree and reflects what they care about most. Issues on the Arizona Voters' Agenda meet **all of** the following criteria:

- "Strongly Agree/Support" is 50% and above among All Likely Voters
- Total Support (i.e., the sum of "Somewhat Agree/Support" and "Strongly Agree/Support") is 50% and above among every political affiliation and age group

What didn't make the Arizona Voters' Agenda?

The Arizona Voters' Agenda survey covered a wide array of issues and topics, and the following issues did NOT reach the level of support among likely voters necessary to be included:

- Banning the teaching of critical race theory and controversial topics.
- Reducing income taxes.
- Eliminating mail-in voting.
- Changing the law to require those who vote by mail to provide their driver's license number or voter ID number in order for their vote to count.
- Completing the wall on the border between the United States and Mexico.

Questions for Candidates

The Arizona Voters' Agenda findings illuminate "big questions" for candidates based on where voters have the strongest agreement. We encourage candidates to answer the call, and moderators, members of the press, and local voters to foster productive dialogue and seek out real answers.

Education

What is your plan to ensure Arizona students have quality teachers and principals?

What should Arizona do to increase teacher pay?

What should Arizona do to ensure every school has resources needed to deliver quality education that prepares every child for the future?

Economy, Inflation & State Spending

The State of Arizona continues to project a budget surplus for next year. What do you think the state should do with the surplus?

The Arizona Legislature passed a bipartisan budget in June 2022 that included investments of surplus dollars. Do you think additional investments are needed, and what would that look like?

Do you believe Arizona should prioritize cutting taxes or continue investing in critical infrastructure to keep up with growth, and why?

What investments would you make in education, transportation, public safety, and other critical infrastructure to support growth?

Water & Environment

What should Arizona do to protect our water future and secure long-term water supplies?

Should Arizona be planning for a future without Colorado River water?

Is Arizona prepared to handle a water crisis? What more can we do to conserve, regulate, and secure additional water supplies?

What sustainable practices should continue and be implemented to protect Arizona's air, land, and water and foster a high quality of life for all?

What more can be done to preserve and protect Arizona's rivers, natural areas, and wildlife?

How will you ensure Arizona makes sustainable gains on environmental concerns affecting everyday lives and economic vitality, such as forest fires and air quality?

How should Arizona invest in securing our water future, cleaner air, energy improvement in rural areas, protecting our electric grid, and managing our forests?

Elections

What should Arizona do to keep our elections secure while preventing barriers to participation?

What can Arizona do to ensure that all candidates, regardless of party affiliation, have the same signature requirements to qualify to run for elected office?

Do you support early and mail-in voting, and why or why not?

Do you believe Arizona elections are fair & secure, and are you confident in the accuracy of the results of the midterm elections? Why or why not?

What do you believe is the role of candidates and elected officials in engaging independent/unaffiliated voters?

Do you think candidates and elected officials are more effective at delivering on the priorities of Arizonans when they fight for what they believe is right and refuse to compromise or when they are willing to compromise and work across the aisle to find bipartisan solutions to complex problems, and why?

Immigration

How do you define a functioning border for commerce, and what is your vision for immigration reform?

How should Arizona influence the Federal Government in creating a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients and dreamers who were brought to Arizona as children?

How do your immigration plans strengthen our business relationships with Mexico and our economy for the long term?

Affordable Housing & Homelessness

What should Arizona do to address inflation and rising costs and make housing more affordable?

How do you propose Arizona ensures all residents have access to safe and affordable housing?

What can Arizona do to ensure developers and landlords support efforts to make affordable housing accessible?