



NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Representative Michelle Ugenti (R-Dist. 23)

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ARIZONA FIRST TO CONSOLIDATE CANDIDATE ELECTIONS TO SINGLE DATE

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (May 17, 2012) – Historic low voter turnout is an issue plaguing Arizona’s electoral process. A major contributing factor is the number of elections and occasions to vote throughout the year. Holding multiple elections is exceedingly cumbersome for well intentioned voters wanting to exercise one of the most fundamental rights of every American.

HB 2826 (consolidated election dates; political subdivisions) provides significant election reform by consolidating the election of candidates to the fall of even years only. This legislation, sponsored by Representative Michelle Ugenti (R-Dist. 23), is the first of its kind enacted in the country. As indicated below, the consolidation of elections has increased voter turnout and reduced election costs for municipalities:

Municipality	Voter Turnout Pre-Consolidation	Voter Turnout Post-Consolidation	Election Cost Pre-Consolidation (per ballot)	Election Cost Post-Consolidation (per ballot)
Fountain Hills	28.24%	49.55%	\$1.45	\$.31
Queen Creek	20.76%	36.72%	\$1.72	\$.31

Governor Jan Brewer expressed her support for the legislation and countered concerns of those opposed to it. In her enactment summary, she stated, “While governmental entities and local election officials affected by this bill have expressed concerns about ballot lengths and increased costs, these were the same arguments raised when the Legislature first enacted the consolidated election schedule and time has shown that it has not hindered the election process. I agree with the Legislature’s statement and the sponsor’s intent to consolidate candidate elections in an effort to increase voter participation and reduce costs.”

What other leaders are saying about the bill’s passage:

Scottsdale Mayor Jim Lane had already experienced the benefits of consolidated candidate elections stating, “In 2008, the City of Scottsdale amended its charter to consolidate elections to a fall cycle of even numbered years. In 2010 it amounted to a savings of \$110,000.00 for the city. Consolidated elections in Scottsdale have brought about great results and I am excited that the rest of Arizona voters will enjoy the same benefits through the passage of HB 2826.

City of Phoenix Councilman Jim Waring spoke highly of the efforts to pass the bill stating, “Representative Ugenti did a terrific job of shepherding this bill through the legislature. Voter turnout for the 2011 Phoenix election was only 27%. With the signing of this legislation, we expect a great increase in voter participation”.

Fellow City of Phoenix Councilman Sal Diciccio stated, “This is one of the most significant pieces of legislation in the last ten years. When this bill was signed, that meant that Arizona’s taxpayers and voters win while special interests lose. Representative Ugenti’s efforts will improve voter turnout for generations to come”.

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