

Arizona Legislative Alert - Week 4, 50 Week Action Plan

What to do about the Electoral College?

Shining a bright light for socially-just public policy in Arizona

All opinions are those of the author, Anne L. Schneider, PhD

December 1, 2016

If you want to be added to or taken from this e-mail list, contact legislativeadvocacy@vuu.org

The 50 Week Action Plan will provide one or two ideas each week for progressive social action showing continued support for public policy and policy proposals that contribute to a more socially-just society. We stand opposed to public policy and policy proposals that are disrespectful to any group or person, anti-democratic, unfair especially to the least advantaged among us, and harmful to the web of life on our planet. (See previous weeks at

<http://www.vuu.org/legislative-advocacy/>

Week 4-- Ideas for Action --

1. Give a donation as a gift --- Remember that relative or friend you would like to honor during this holiday season? Someone who shares your values and your concerns about the impact of the recent election on social justice and democracy? **Consider giving a donation** in their name to an advocacy group or charity that shares your (and your friend/relative) values. You can find possibilities and ideas [below](#) (scroll down if the link doesn't work).
2. [What to do about the Electoral College?](#) -- Begin (or continue) **your own education** about the Electoral College system of electing the President, and decide what (if anything) you want to say to the Arizona electors who will be meeting at the State Capitol December 19th. Unofficial addresses and ways to contact the Arizona electors are found [below](#). (Scroll down if the link doesn't work.) If you live in another state, you can find the names of your electors at this site on [Wikipedia](#). BE RESPECTFUL if you decide to contact the electors. These are honorary positions, held by respectable citizens, who did not agree to the task with the idea that it would be a controversial event!

Electors actually meet on December 19 at the State Capitol. At least two rallies are planned for Arizona (at the Capitol, 1700 W. Washington) posted on social media: [3 p.m. rally](#) and [8 a.m. to 2 p.m. rally](#)

What To Do? Quick overview of three primary options:

1. Say nothing. Let the electors do their jobs now in 2016 and work to reform the Electoral College later.

2. Urge the Republican electors to abstain or vote for anyone except Donald Trump. He has to have 270 electoral votes to win. He currently has 306 so if only a handful of Republican electors do not vote for him, the election will go into the U.S. House of Representatives where each state's delegation has ONE VOTE. This would enable to Republicans to decide who they actually want to be president, and it does not have to be Donald Trump.
3. Urge the Republican electors to vote for the candidate who won the national popular vote (Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by about 2.5 million). She currently has 232 electoral votes, so if 39 Republican electors vote for the national popular vote winner, she would become the President.

Scroll down to see an [extended discussion](#) of these options. This is a complicated issue, and good arguments can be found for many different positions.

Mark Your Calendar

December 7. Training with ASU economist Tom Rex to understand Arizona's budget and revenue structure. Sponsored by VIP, Tuesday, December 6, 6:30 pm, at Paradise Valley United Methodist Church, 4455 E. Lincoln Drive. Learn more about our economic context and how we can build support for Human Develop strategies. We will also be proposing our (VIP) 2017 local organizing and legislative action strategies. Please RSVP to vippbx@gmail.com.

December 19. At least two rallies to protest Trumps election are planned for Arizona (at the Capitol, 1700 W. Washington) posted on social media: [3 p.m. rally](#) and [8 a.m. to 2 p.m. rally](#)

December 20. De-Escalation Training – Want to learn more about how to de-escalate conflicts involving hateful words, actions, physical threats? Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation is offering de-escalation training **Tuesday, Dec. 20, at 7 p.m. at VUU**. (6500 West Del Rio, Chandler). *If you know of other de-escalation training programs that are open to the public and would like to be listed here, contact legislativeadvocacy@vuu.org*

January 7. Voter's Rights Summit! League of Women Voters, Arizona, will hold an all-day Voter's Summit, January 7 to learn and strategize on how to protect voting rights in Arizona. In Phoenix, ASU New College, West. Outstanding list of speakers. More information [here](#).

January 20. [Peace Vigil in Phoenix](#). Solidarity march. There is a major march on DC inauguration day and the day after. This is something we could do locally at our own capital in Phoenix. In solidarity with those marching on Washington, let's drown out the voices of hatred, racism, bigotry, misogyny, sexism, xenophobia...etc. Wear your safety pins. Bring signs. Bring candles for a peace vigil. Bring family and friends. Peace and Love are not dead. They are alive WITHIN US and stronger when we are together. Be there!
January 20th 7pm. January 20, 2017 @ 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm WHERE: 1700 W Washington St Phoenix, AZ 85007 USA Free

Jan. 21. [Women's March on Washington](#), Saturday, Jan 21 (day after inauguration). (Men are welcome too).

Jan. 21. [Women's marches in Arizona](#) in support of the Jan. 21 March on Washington At this link you will find information about activities in Arizona. There's a meetup group (Mesa) on January 17; rallies are listed for Tucson and Flagstaff, and if you join the list, you should get information on a march in Phoenix when that is solidified. (Men are welcome). It is possible that Arizona's Planned Parenthood and NARAL chapters will be organizing a March on Jan. 20 or 21.

UU Activities

- Jan. 8. VUU will hold an orientation/training for the UU Day at the Legislature. Persons from other UU congregations and other faith-based congregations urged to attend. Learn, organize, get talking points ready.
- Feb. 20 – UU Day at the Legislature (Monday, President's day), sponsored by UUJAZ, the UU state wide advocacy network for Justice.
- **UU Justice District Assembly (DA) March 31 – April 2nd 2017** Looking for a place of safety and away to make a difference in these troubled times? If the answer is yes, then Justice DA may be the answer for you, this 3 day event offers a full-scale immersion experience here in Arizona. Registration will open on January 1st 2017, but detailed information is available now. Please take a moment to check this out:
<http://justiceda2017.weebly.com/>

CALL the LOCAL office of your U.S. Representative

<http://usecalltoaction.com/>

WhoIsMyRepresentative.com (links to your U.S. Rep and Senators, with contact information)

The AZ Legislative Alert THANKS those individuals, groups, and organizations that spread the word about participating in A 50-Week-Plan including [The Issue Wonk](#), [Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation](#), [Arizona List](#), and other unnamed participants. Groups or organizations that would like to be named here, contact legislativealert@vuu.org to express your interest and get more information.

Reading *The Issue Wonk*? A weekly progressive wrap-up from around the United States and the world. Well worth the time! Sign up [here](#). (It's free).

Looking for someplace to spend a Sunday morning that is peaceful, joyful, progressive, focused on life's most important questions, and how to make the world a better place? Try the

[Valley Unitarian Universalist congregation](#) (6400 W. Del Rio, Chandler) just east of I-10 on Ray Road.

Sometimes it is important just to elect more progressive people! Take a look at the [Arizona List](#).

What To Do About the Electoral College, Part I

An Extended Discussion of 3 Options for the December 19 Electoral College Vote

By Anne L. Schneider, Ph.D.

1. **Say nothing at all**

__Many of you may prefer to say nothing at all and let the electors do their job, as they fully expected to by virtue of state law or pledges made at the time of their appointment. Arizona has no law binding electors to vote for the candidate who won the popular vote in the state, but electors are expected by pledge and tradition to vote for the winner. Thus, for an elector to violate that pledge is asking them to break their word. On the other hand, the founders established the Electoral College system intentionally to prevent a popular but unqualified candidate from conning the public through lies, deception, exaggeration, name-calling, bullying, and false promises. Some contend this is what Donald Trump has done – conned the public.

In spite of the efforts by mainstream media to fact check his statements or apply common-sense logic to his proposals, enough people voted for him anyway. Others argue that in spite of these issues, the electors should be allowed to cast their votes as expected, and Trump become president, because of the damage it would do to the integrity of the U.S. democracy if the rules were changed after the election has been held.

Another point is that whoever actually won would be a “tainted” president from the outset. And still another argument against doing anything is that the alternatives would probably produce a result just as bad from a social justice perspective, such as Mike Pence becoming President, as he has advanced far-right religious views entirely unacceptable to progressives.

Thus, some argue, the best choice for progressives is to let the electoral college take its course for 2016 but work on reforms in the future.

2. **Urge Republican electors to abstain or vote for someone else.**

Although abstaining or voting for someone else would require electors to break from tradition, it is not clear in Arizona that the electors actually were asked to sign a pledge supporting the winner of the state election and some are on record as not being Trump supporters. Persuasive arguments can be made that founders expected electors to use their discretion when casting their vote – after all, that is a primary reason it is in the Constitution.

Why should an elector cast a vote for a person who is unqualified to be President? Unqualified in that he has no public service experience, has demonstrated a surprising and frightening lack of knowledge of domestic and foreign affairs as well as obvious gaps in his understanding of what the powers and responsibilities of the President actually are.

Why should electors be expected to vote for a person who, because of his business dealings and foreign entanglements may be committing an impeachable offense ([violation of the emolument clause of the constitution](#)) on the very day he is inaugurated? Is there anything moral or patriotic about voting for a person who proposes violation of the constitution such as taking away someone's citizenship if they burn the flag! Citizenship is conferred by the constitution and is not a permissible penalty for any criminal action.

Why should an elector be expected to vote for someone who in his campaign demonstrated autocratic, dictator-like behavior? Perhaps the elector should believe Trump when he said he would put his opponent in jail, would levy a 35% tax on companies trying to import goods back into the United States, would have "different generals" if they refused to obey his order to violate U.S. and international law banning waterboarding.

Perhaps electors should believe what Trump said and vote in such a way as to deny him the Presidency. If no candidate gets 270 votes, the election goes to the U.S. House of Representatives where each state's delegation has one vote, assuring that the Republican party would still control the Presidency but possibly with a different person. These "unfaithful" voters are sometimes called "Hamilton" voters, because Alexander Hamilton believed that the electoral college was a necessary protection for democracy.

"The process of the Electoral College affords a moral certainty, that the office of the President will never fall to the lot of any man who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications." -Alexander Hamilton, Federalist Paper #68

Supporters of the idea of abstaining or voting one's conscience are not urging electors to be unfaithful, immoral, or anti-democratic, but are urging them to carry out the original intent of the constitution. If one thinks that Donald Trump's rise to the Presidency is similar to Hitler's rise to power in Weimer Germany, then denying him the electoral vote is the right thing to do.

3. Urge Republican electors to vote for the candidate who won the national popular vote.

At first glance this may seem like a cynical strategy of Hillary Clinton's campaign to "steal" the election that she did not win. On the other hand, one of the most popular [reforms of the Electoral College](#) system is for state legislatures to pass legislation requiring their electors to cast their votes for whoever won the national popular vote, with the condition that this requirement does not go into effect until enough states have joined the "compact" so that 270 votes would be guaranteed to the winner of the national popular vote. Ten states and the District of Columbia have already passed this legislation. All are Democratic states, and therefore no electoral votes would be changed for 2016.

In 2016, the Arizona House passed HB2456 (40-16) to join this state compact requiring Arizona electors to cast their votes for the national popular vote winner. SB1218 would have done the

same thing, and it had 20 sponsor, with only 16 votes needed to win. However, Senate leadership did not call it up for a vote.

Thus, a supporter of this position could argue that now is the time to put this reform in place and therefore the current electors are justified in casting their vote for the winner of the national popular vote. The national popular vote idea is supported by two principles most people will agree are central to democracy: one is that a person who wins more of the votes in an election defeats those who garnered fewer votes; and another is that everyone's vote should count. The Electoral College achieves neither of these.

The United States is the only advanced democracy in the world in which the winner of the national popular vote does not necessarily win the presidency. This also happened in 2000 when Al Gore had more popular votes than George Bush, and three times in the 1800s.

Also, the U.S. Presidency is the only election in the United States for public officials in which the person who wins the most votes can actually be defeated by someone who gained fewer votes. (Someone who wins a primary may later be defeated in a run-off but in the final analysis, the person with the most votes wins).

In the current Electoral College system, the "winner take all" provision means that the votes cast by people in the state who voted for the losing candidate do not count at all. Even if the two states that allocate their electoral votes by congressional district, those voting for the losing candidate in that district are among those whose votes do not count at all. Some elections use proportional voting so that each candidate receives votes proportionate to their share of the election, but that is not the case in the Electoral College.

These last two options bring up the question of what the penalty is for an "unfaithful" elector, and in the 29 states that bind their electors by law, the penalty is a misdemeanor and small fine. If such a penalty was imposed, it could be challenged and might be found unconstitutional since the constitution gives electors the right to vote for the candidate they prefer and does not bind the in any way.

Unofficial and unverified contact information for AZ Republican Presidential Electors

Once you decide what you want to say (if anything) here is the way to contact the Arizona electors. There is no official contact information, so you can try to addresses below, or if you prefer, just send cards or letters addressed to each in C/O Robert Graham, chair, Arizona Republican Party, 3501 N. 24th street, Phoenix, AZ 85016. Phone 602 274 5439. Again, be respectful.

Bruce Ash

Electors, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College

4929 East Parade Ground Loop

Tucson AZ 85712-6623 or email Bash@paulAshMgt.com business phone: 520 795 2100

Walter Begay Jr.

Elector, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College

c/o Arizona Republican Party

3501 North 24th Street

Phoenix, AZ 85016 or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/people/Walter-Begay-Jr/100005002604780...>

Robert Graham

Elector, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College

Arizona Republican Party

3501 North 24th Street

Phoenix, AZ 85016

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Elector, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College

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Mesa AZ 85209-2701 Phone 480- 214 5493 or(10855 sheppard ave 85212, Mesa

Carole Joyce

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31517 North 19th Ave

Phoenix AZ 85085-8003

James O'Connor

Elector, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College

LD23 Republican Committee

8776 East Shea Blvd, Suite 106-341
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

Jane Pierpoint Lynch
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c/o Arizona Republican Party
3501 N 24th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85016 or Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/jane.lynch.1291>

J. Foster Morgan
Elector, AZ Delegation to the U.S. Electoral College
6913 Topeka Drive,
Glendale AZ 85308

You can find previous copies of the AZ Legislative Alert and previous weeks of the 50 week plan at <http://www.vuu.org/legislative-advocacy>

Choose an organization that works for the safety, rights, liberty, and opportunity, for all people especially those who were disrespected in the Presidential campaign: women, people of color, Muslim, immigrants, disabled, GLBT and those who are being disrespected now for their support of DT especially working class white men. Stand for the respect and dignity of all people by joining, donating to, volunteering for an organization of your choice. Here are some possibilities. The link is to the Arizona chapter, but you can also join national chapters of most of these groups. (If the links don't work in your browser, just google the name).

- [American Civil Liberties Union](#) – The ACLU may be the best choice for opposing illegal and unethical policies and actions by the new administration that will begin January 20, 2017. There are extraordinary signals already that the DT administration may have more conflicts of interest and be more corrupt, as well as unjust, than any we have seen before. The ACLU is a real hawk on basic values – freedom of speech, religion, assembly, and the press.
- [Planned Parenthood](#) – Planned Parenthood is under attack in Arizona and throughout the United States as they courageously continue to provide health care for women seeking family planning, cancer screening, and legal abortions. They need our help.

- [Sierra Club](#) – perhaps less noticed but surely high on the agenda are the attacks that DT made on environmental efforts to confront climate change and protect our planet. We are all part of the interconnected web of existence. Support for the Sierra Club and volunteer work is needed.
- [League of Women Voters](#) – The League is one of the best ever in its commitment to rational, logical, inclusive approach to issues and its support for democracy. There are chapters all over the metropolitan areas of Arizona, and also a state-wide chapter. “Democracy is not a spectator sport.” Women and men both are welcome to join.
- [Black Lives Matter](#) – this organization has re-energized the civil rights movement for persons of African-American decent and holds us all accountable for making the United States a place for all.
- [Puente Arizona](#) – Puente AZ is the most active advocacy group in Arizona when it comes to state-wide legislation. Quoting from their web page: “The Puente Human Rights Movement is a grassroots migrant justice organization based in Phoenix, Arizona. We develop, educate, and empower migrant communities to protect and defend our families and ourselves.”
- [NARAL Pro-Choice Arizona](#) – Women’s reproductive rights are absolutely at risk, as the new administration may be able to appoint judges to overturn Roe v. Wade. NARAL’s mission: “The mission of NARAL Pro-Choice Arizona is to develop and sustain a constituency that uses the political process to guarantee every woman the right to make personal decisions regarding the full range of reproductive choices, including preventing unintended pregnancy, bearing healthy children, and choosing legal abortion.”
- [Southern Poverty Law Center](#) – SPLC tracks hate groups, hate crime, white nationalists, NAZI groups, as well as incidents by alt-right and other extremist violent organizations. This is probably the best national site for offering opposition to the KKK and all the other racist, homophobic, hate groups.
- [Equality Arizona](#) – This is a proactive advocacy group in Arizona working to protect the rights and lives of LGBTQ persons. “We network, stay focused, and organize around key issues facing the LGBTQ community.”
- [Council on American – Islamic Relations](#) - CAIR is an advocacy group working against the anti-Islam movements in the United States.

[American Association University Women](#) – The AAUW is a long-standing organization for women who have attended college. It advocates for women and girls, with special emphasis on education pay equity, human trafficking, earned sick/safe leave and prison reform.

[Anti-Defamation League](#) – The Arizona Anti-Defamation League is one of many branches of this national organization that provide “...an ongoing and dynamic counter to bigotry, discrimination and hate in all forms, against any and all groups.”

[Secular Coalition of Arizona](#) – SCA is a chapter in the national Secular Coalition that advocates for a continuation of secular governance. Special attention is given to opposing legislation that permits discrimination in the name of religion and that allows public funds for religious schools.

These issues become ever more important as the religious right gains ascendancy in national and state elected politics.

[Children’s Action Alliance](#) – The AZ Children’s Action Alliance maintains a very active tracking and monitoring of AZ Legislation involving children and families including education, health, immigration, welfare, minimum wages and so on. CAA puts out an outstanding analysis of the AZ budget each year, and a report on how legislators voted.

[Arizona School Board Association](#) – ASBA is a progressive education lobbying and advocacy group that tracks legislation in real time and provides weekly updates on bills impacting K-12 education.

[Arizona Advocacy Network](#) – AZAN is a state-wide advocacy group focused on good government, including voting rights, opposing voting suppression bills in the AZ Legislature, and monitoring elections. They have an active presence in tracking AZ legislative activity.

[Valley Interfaith Project](#) – VIP is a progressive interfaith group that is active in monitoring state legislation in Arizona and in holding “civic forums” on a variety of public policy issues such as prison reform, immigration, education.

[Arizona Faith Network](#) - AFN is an interfaith organization with active involvement in progressive public policy issues and environmental concerns.

[Protecting Arizona’s Family Coalition](#) – PAFCO is a state-wide advocacy group whose policy priorities including health, poverty, welfare, disability rights, children, and sexual abuse as well as others. PAFCO holds training/orientation for legislative action and maintains an active notification and presence at the Legislature.

[AZ National Organization for Women](#) – the AZ chapter of the National Organization for Women advocates for women’s rights. Unlike most of the 501 organizations, NOW is a 501 c 4 and endorses candidates for office and engages in more direct lobbying.

[Arizona Disability Advocacy Coalition](#)- The AZDAC “coordinates advocacy efforts that promote public policy, and enhances the choice, dignity, rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities and their families. AzDAC meets monthly at the AZ Ability360 Center. [American Civil Liberties Union](#)

There are many other worthy organizations locally and nationally. Choose one (or more) and volunteer, become a member, make a donation or help in every way you can.

The Arizona Legislative Alert is a project of the Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation (Chandler) and UUJAZ (Unitarian Universalist Justice Advocacy Arizona). Anne L. Schneider, Ph.D., is a retired political science professor and former Dean of the College of Public Programs at Arizona State University.

Contact legislativeadvocacy@vuu.org to join or resign from the AZ Legislative Alert.

Valley Unitarian Universalist Congregation –

Senior Minister, Rev. Andy Burnette; Visiting Minister, Rev. Earl Holt (September through mid-November); Music Minister, Rev. Kellie Walker; Director of Life-Span Religious Education, Marci Beaudoin. Administrator, Sue Ringler. Located: 6400 W. Del Rio Drive, Chandler, AZ 480 899 4249 www.vuu.org For previous copies of the *Arizona Legislative Alert*, go to <https://www.vuu.org/legislative-advocacy>. VUU holds services each Sunday at 10:30. You are welcome here!

Unitarian Universalist Justice Arizona Network -- Executive Director Rev. Lisa

McDaniel-Hutchings; Justice Coordinator.... Alison Wood Policy Coordinator, Anne L. Schneider. Board Members, UUJAZ: Sharon Travis, Liz Swan (Chair), Rev. Matthew Crary, Bobbi Bollinger. www.uujaz.org.