



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Ben Toma (R-27)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Ben Toma Thanks Republican Colleagues for Passing Bill to Remember Victims of Communism, While Most Democrats Unite in Opposition

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – [HB 2629](#), legislation sponsored by House Speaker Ben Toma to remember victims of communism and teach Arizona students about the atrocities of communist regimes was passed by the House of Representatives today, with all but two Democrats voting against.

“Teaching Arizona students about the evils of communism shouldn’t be a partisan issue, yet here we are,” said Speaker Toma. **“Thankfully, Republicans get it. As someone who lived in communist Romania, I can attest that Marxist ideology has left a lasting scar on our world. For more than 100 years and over 100 million lives lost, the legacy of communism is death, oppression, deprivation, economic suffering, and families being torn apart. It’s important to educate about this dark history, to ensure that the atrocities of communism are never forgotten, and future generations can learn from those who suffered in the past and gain a deeper appreciation for the democratic principles that underpin our free society.”**

HB 2629 establishes November 7 of each year as Victims of Communism Day in Arizona, joining many other states that have enacted similar legislation. Additionally, the bill places an educational focus on study of the history of communist regimes. The State Board of Education (SBE) would be tasked with developing a list of recommended resources on the history of communism that align with academic standards in statute. Starting in the 2024-2025 school year, high school taking American government courses will have at least 45 minutes of classroom instruction on the history of global communist regimes, encompassing figures such as Mao Zedong, Joseph Stalin, Fidel Castro, Vladimir Lenin, Pol Pot, and Nicolas Maduro. Students would learn about how victims suffered under such regimes, through poverty, starvation, forced migration, lethal violence, and the suppression of speech.

Representative Quang Nguyen, Chairman the House Judiciary Committee, expressed bewilderment at the stark absence of bipartisan backing. **“I think if my colleagues on the other side of the aisle grew up under a communist regime, as Ben and I both did, this vote would have been unanimous. Opposing the education of Arizona students on the history of communism and those who have suffered from it is an extreme and shameful position that’s hard for Democrats to defend. And it’s certainly far from where most Arizona parents stand.”**

Similar educational observances easily passed the Legislature with bipartisan support, including Sandra Day O’Connor [Civics Celebration Day](#) and [9/11 Education Day](#), both requiring related school instruction for some portion of the day.

Ben Toma is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives and serves Legislative District 27, which includes areas of Glendale, Peoria, and Phoenix. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepBenToma.

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