



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Speaker Ben Toma (R-27)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

Wednesday, April 3, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Speaker Ben Toma Condemns Governor Hobbs' Veto of Bill Aimed at Educating Students on Communism's Atrocities

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Arizona Speaker of the House Ben Toma responded to Governor Katie Hobbs' veto of [HB 2629](#), legislation he sponsored to remember victims of communism and teach Arizona students about the atrocities of communist regimes:

"I find Governor Hobbs' veto of HB 2629 both indefensible and personally offensive. Having lived under the oppressive regime of communist Romania, I have firsthand knowledge of the devastating impact these ideologies have inflicted on billions worldwide. Communism's legacy is marked by death, oppression, deprivation, economic suffering, and the shredding of all that binds families and communities together. It is a history that must be remembered and taught, not dismissed, ignored, or vetoed.

"The Governor's veto and the limited bipartisan support for HB 2629 reflects a deeply concerning trend where the education of our students on fundamental historical truths is becoming a partisan issue. This should not be a matter of politics, but a matter of ensuring our future generations are well-informed, critical thinkers who appreciate the freedoms they have.

"Sadly, Governor Hobbs has denied Arizona students a crucial opportunity: to learn from the past and understand the sacrifices of those who suffered under communist regimes.

"While I respect the Governor's gesture to revise our state's Social Studies Standards, I simply do not trust her administration's ability or willingness to accurately reflect communism's legacy. The academic requirements must be codified in statute, as my bill would have done."

HB 2629 would designate November 7 as Victims of Communism Day annually 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 required to develop 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 would include 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.

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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