



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative David Cook (R-7)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

---

Monday, April 29, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## State Representative David Cook Calls on Governor Hobbs to Prioritize Public & Child Safety Despite Budget Constraints

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – Arizona State Representative David Cook, Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, has written Governor Katie Hobbs, urging that the state agency hiring freeze recently ordered by her does not compromise the protection of public safety and child welfare.

Representative Cook highlights the detrimental impacts of the hiring freeze on critical agencies, particularly the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Child Safety (DCS). He points out alarming vacancy rates within DPS, including 21 percent in the Highway Patrol Division and 29 percent in the Criminal Investigations Division. Such vacancies significantly compromise public safety and the well-being of Arizonans and strongly urges her to reconsider the hiring freeze in these crucial departments.

**“These are agencies that are absolutely critical to the safety of our citizens and protecting their needs must be a priority as we move forward in crafting a state budget,”** Representative Cook writes. **“This is not the time to restrict [DPS’] ability to be competitive at such a critical time for our law enforcement officers.”**

Representative Cook’s entire letter is attached below.

*David Cook is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 7, which includes Pinal, Gila, Coconino, and Navajo Counties. He is Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the House International Trade Committee. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepDavidCook.*

###

DAVID L. COOK  
1700 WEST WASHINGTON, SUITE H  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2844  
CAPITOL PHONE: (602) 926-5162  
TOLL FREE: 1-800-352-8404  
dcook@azleg.gov



COMMITTEES:  
EDUCATION  
LAND, AGRICULTURE &  
RURAL AFFAIRS  
TRANSPORTATION &  
INFRASTRUCTURE,  
Chairman  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE  
Chairman

DISTRICT 7

Arizona House of Representatives  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

April 26, 2024

The Honorable Katie Hobbs  
Governor of the State of Arizona  
1700 W. Washington St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Hobbs,

As you know our state is experiencing a budget shortfall that will require us to make hard decisions and will affect Arizonans throughout our whole state. I appreciate your leadership over these tough negotiations, and I have faith that we will be able to navigate this important issue for the protection of all of our people.

I want to express my concern over your recent decision to implement a hiring freeze for state agencies. This includes the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Child Safety (DCS). These agencies are absolutely critical to the safety of our citizens, and for protecting their needs. These agencies must be a priority as we move forward in crafting a state budget.

According to the DPS 2023 Annual Personnel Report, the Department is experiencing a 21% vacancy rate in the Highway Patrol Division and a 29% vacancy rate in the Criminal Investigations Division. These vacancies present a challenge that we must address, or we risk the safety of the public by preventing the Department from filling these much-needed roles. In total the Department is experiencing a shortage of 500 personnel that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. Despite a 15% raise in 2022, the Department's salaries still remain below market competitors. This is not the time to restrict the Department's ability to be competitive at such a critical time for our law enforcement officers.

I understand that we will be forced to make hard choices regarding the budget situation, but there are some areas where we must be steadfast in our support, so I respectfully ask that you reconsider your decision for the safety of our great citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Cook".

The Honorable David Cook  
Arizona House of Representatives, LD 7  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair  
House International Trade Committee Chair