

Top AZ lawmakers back border wall



GRACE TREJO PHOTOS, ARIZONA DAILY STAR, FILE 2026

Tohono O'odham Nation Chairman Verlon Jose stands on the U.S. side of the San Miguel Gate earlier this year. In a new legal brief, Arizona House Speaker Steve Montenegro and Senate President Warren Petersen say border security outweighs concerns about border wall construction raised by the the tribe in a lawsuit.

They say security outweighs concerns about construction through reservation

HOWARD FISCHER
Capitol Media Services

PHOENIX — Top Republican state lawmakers are lining up with the Department of Homeland Security — and against the Tohono O'odham Nation — over whether the federal agency can build 62 miles of border wall through the reservation.

In a new legal brief, House Speaker Steve Montenegro and Senate President Warren Petersen say that Arizona is on the front line — and most affected — by those who cross the border illegally. That includes not just having people in the

country who are not vetted but also the drugs they smuggle and the crime they cause.

And that, they are telling U.S. District Court Judge Richard Leon, is why he should conclude that the interests of Homeland Security outweigh the concerns of the Tohono O'odham, both in terms of erecting a fence on what it says is reservation land as well as dividing the tribe, which has existed for centuries on both sides of the border.

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According to the government, the contract for miles of new border fencing in Arizona was awarded last month, with design work starting this month. Construction activities are not anticipated to start before Oct. 12.

Arizonans say SNAP failing them

REIA LI
Arizona Republic

Britney Gilles parked and got her daughter's stroller out of the car, then looked around the St. Mary's food pantry in Surprise. She didn't know where to go, so she asked a security guard, who directed her to line up at a window on the side of the building. It was her first time at a food pantry.

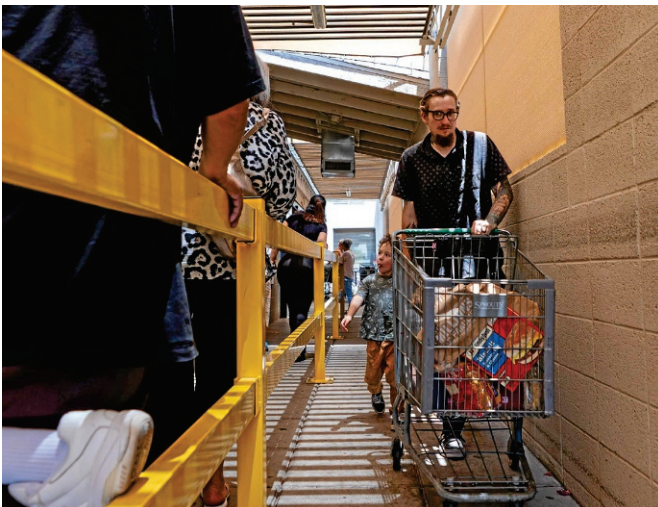
After waiting in a line for a while, she was given a shopping

cart filled with food — pastries, hot dogs, lettuce, cans of beans and peanut butter.

Gilles is a special education teacher. She's taught in both the Dysart and Peoria school districts, although now she teaches special needs kids at their homes.

Gilles said she never thought she'd be in the position to need a food bank.

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DIANNIE CHAVEZ, ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Brett Kovac and his son, Nico Kovac, walk back to their car after receiving food at St. Mary's Food Bank in Surprise.

Senator Graham dies at 71

JAMES POWEL, ZACHARY SCHERMELE AND JAY STAHL,
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham died on July 11, according to his office. He was 71.

Graham's death marks the passing of a longtime conservative fixture of the Senate, and one of President Donald Trump's closest political allies.

The lawmaker "passed away from a brief and sudden illness," a statement posted to his social media account said, adding, "Senator Graham's family appreciates prayers at this time and asks for privacy during this incredibly difficult period."

In his more than three decades in Washington, Graham played major roles in crafting key pieces of legislation, affecting millions of Americans' lives, while also developing a reputation as a stark foreign policy hawk. The Republican died just a year after helping shepherd through the One, Big, Beautiful Bill Act as the powerful chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.

Trump, a friend of Graham's, called the South Carolina senator "one of the greatest people and Senators I have ever known."

"He was always working, and was a true American Patriot," Trump wrote on social media. "Lindsey will be greatly missed!!!"

Graham met with Zelenskyy days ago

Graham met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy just days ago in Kyiv, the European nation's capital city. "Good meeting with U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham," Zelenskyy wrote on social media on Friday.

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Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-South Carolina, seen here in May at an event in Anderson, South Carolina, has died. He was 71.

ALEX MARTIN,
GREENVILLE NEWS
VIA USA TODAY
NETWORK

Pima County schools receive safety funding

SIERRA BLASER
Arizona Daily Star

Various Pima County schools will receive state funding for armed police officers and mental health professionals this school year.

The state is using about \$53 million in School Safety Program carryover dollars from previous years for armed school officers and mental health professionals for fiscal year 2027, Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne said in a news release late last month. The money was allocated to the first 560 Arizona schools that requested officers, according to the release.

In the Tucson area, Marana Unified School District is slated to get the most resources from the funding, adding school security officers at nine schools. According to state documents, the schools include:

- Butterfield Elementary School
- Coyote Trail Elementary School
- DeGrazia Elementary School
- Ironwood Elementary School
- Marana Vista Academy
- MCAT High School
- Quail Run Elementary School
- Rattlesnake Ridge Elementary School
- Tangerine Farms K-8

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