

ARIZONA REPUBLIC

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 2026

azcentral.com

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Inside the AZ effort to regulate speech

Observers discuss motives, legality of bills

Taylor Seely
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Making it illegal to warn someone about police. Imprisoning a librarian for providing access to books. Banning teens from social media without their parent's consent.

These were just a few ways Arizonans' speech rights were challenged the past six months. State lawmakers, driven by both partisan divisions and concerns about emerging technology,

debated a series of bills that dealt with free expression.

The ideas mostly came from Republicans, who have majorities in the House and Senate and control which proposals get heard. But Democrats also threw in support for some restrictions.

The parties split over measures to rein in protesters and ban children from drag shows. However, efforts to get kids off social media and regulate "sexual material" on the internet to prevent non-consensual, AI-generated porn initially drew support from both sides of

the aisle.

Some of what happened at the Arizona Capitol this year reflects a troubling pattern playing out across the country, First Amendment experts say. They see lawmakers criminalizing free speech or pushing regulations that chill people's rights to express themselves.

Proposals that failed in Arizona this year have succeeded in other states. The outcomes were consequential: years-long legal battles at the taxpayer's expense and the purging of thousands of books from library shelves. At least one state opened adult-only libraries where visitors are carded at the door.

This is happening as the federal gov-

ernment has wielded its power in unprecedented ways to suppress broadcast companies, law firms and universities whom they disagree with, experts say.

But the Arizona efforts also illustrate a unique moment of societal reckoning with social media and artificial intelligence. As technological advancements bring new ways to communicate and create, lawmakers are grappling with how to balance free expression and public health.

"There are countries outright banning (social media for teens) altogether,"

See **SPEECH**, Page 4A

Citizenship a birthright: Advocates praise ruling



Members of the media interview supporters of the U.S. Supreme Court's birthright citizenship ruling in Washington on June 30. CHENEY ORR/REUTERS

Trump executive order not valid, Supreme Court decides

Daniel Gonzalez
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

Immigrant advocates in Arizona applauded the Supreme Court's ruling on Tuesday, June 30, which rejected President Donald Trump's executive order that sought to block children born in the United States to undocumented immigrants from automatically becoming citizens.

The Supreme Court's justices ruled 6-3 against the president's executive order, stating that children born in the United States to parents unlawfully or temporarily present are "subject to the jurisdiction" of the United States and

Despite the loss, Trump will try to turn the defeat into a political rallying cry, said Cesar Garcia Hernandez, a law professor.

are citizens at birth under the Fourteenth Amendment's Citizenship Clause.

"It would have been disastrous," had the Supreme Court upheld Trump's executive order, said Delia Salvatierra, a

Phoenix immigration attorney. "It would have upended people's lives, people's futures. People were very afraid."

Even so, the Supreme Court's ruling was based on the words and meaning of 14th Amendment, not policy or political considerations or "siding with undocumented people coming to the United States," Salvatierra noted.

"The Court reaffirmed the text of the Constitution. It re-affirmed that the Constitution and birthright citizenship are the law of the land, and re-affirmed that the executive branch has

See **DECISION**, Page 4A

DOJ is looking into Sen. Gallego

Spokesperson: Inquiry a waste of public funds

Stephanie Murray
Arizona Republic
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Justice Department is investigating Sen. Ruben Gallego over potential misuse of political funds, according to two published reports.

Gallego, D-Arizona, who is considering a 2028 presidential campaign, has been under scrutiny for using political dollars to pay for childcare and luxury trips to Disney, Miami and the Super Bowl, often with his family.

The Justice Department probe into Gallego came hours after news broke that the Senate Ethics Committee had wrapped its investigation into him and found no evidence of wrongdoing.

The Justice Department development was reported by Axios and the New York Times. Both outlets cited unnamed sources.

"It's the least surprising news of the week that this comes immediately after the Senate Ethics Committee cleared Senator Gallego of rightwing smears pushed by the administration weeks ago," Gallego spokesperson Jacques Petit said in a written statement. "This administration may be obsessed with abusing taxpayer dollars to silence critics, but Senator Gallego will not take his eye off the ball and will continue holding Washington Republicans accountable for rising costs and new wars."

The Justice Department declined to comment.

Gallego has been under the national microscope in the months since his former "best friend" Eric Swalwell resigned from Congress after being accused of sexual misconduct.

Gallego denounced Swalwell and said he had been betrayed by his ex-friend in an emotional news conference.

Republicans have sought to tie Gallego to Swalwell in the wake of his resignation. Rep. Anna Paulina Luna, R-Florida, accused Gallego of campaign finance violations and "inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature," which sparked the now-dismissed complaint to the Senate Ethics Committee.

Gallego has also been criticized for using campaign cash on luxury outings. Gallego spent thousands in political cash on childcare and trips that included his family.

At times, that spending included Swalwell. The pair used a leadership PAC to fund a pricey trip to the Super

See **INVESTIGATION**, Page 4A

HOBBS PITCHES BIPARTISANSHIP 1B



Gov. Katie Hobbs sits for an interview with The Arizona Republic. MEGAN MENDOZA/THE REPUBLIC

High court to hear AZ case

The Supreme Court will take up whether Arizona can mandate that voters provide proof of citizenship when they register to vote. **3A**

Medicaid rule leads to lawsuit

Arizona joins a coalition of other states in suing the Trump administration over provisions of federal Medicaid work requirements that are scheduled to take effect in 2027. **6A**

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to the azcentral.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus section. Check it out today!



Volume 137 | No. 44
Subscribe 800-332-6733
©2026 \$3.49



0 40901 53140 1