



Arizona Citizens Defense League®

Protecting Your Freedom

VOLUME 2025, Issue 1

AzCDL's Membership Newsletter

February 2025

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VICTORY in Pima County!

AzCDL's case against Pima County for its violation of Arizona's firearm preemption law (A.R.S. § 13-3108) ended in **victory for your rights!** Judge Greg Sakall of the Arizona Superior Court in Pima County rejected the county's motion to dismiss the case and granted our request for summary judgment.

Judge Sakall ruled from the bench in our favor on all claims! He found the Pima County Ordinance is preempted under both Subsection A and Subsection D of A.R.S. § 13-3108.

There is still some paperwork to complete, including submittal of a proposed form of judgment and, of course, a motion to recover our costs and attorney fees, but it's definitely **time to celebrate!**

Protecting Your Freedom

AzCDL worked hard to enact Arizona's firearm preemption law, which prevents cities and counties from passing firearm ordinances that are more restrictive than state law. Once passed, good laws also have to be vigorously defended whenever they are violated. A decade ago, the City of Tucson tried to impose restrictions on gun owners and was struck down in court. Now, Pima County's attempt to do the same has gone down in flames.

Click here to read more about the case: <https://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/victory-court-strikes-down-illegal-firearms-mandate-in-pima-county-az/>

Congratulations to our plaintiff, AzCDL member Chris King, and the team at the Goldwater Institute who represented AzCDL in this case!

Expanding the Scope of Our Work—A New AzCDL PAC

For 19 years, AzCDL's sole focus was on legislative lobbying at the state Capitol. In that time we've had 64 bills signed into law by 4 governors and stopped literally hundreds of bills that would have infringed on your *right to keep and bear arms* from seeing the light of day.

Last year, we partnered with organizations specializing in defending your rights in court, like the Second Amendment Foundation and the Goldwater Institute. Those partnerships are already paying off as you can see from our court victory over Pima County.

Now, I'm excited to announce the formation of a new **AzCDL Political Action Committee**. Along with our strong legislative presence and burgeoning capabilities in litigation, the new AzCDL PAC will empower us to engage in the third leg of the political arena—electoral politics. As a 501c4 non-profit, AzCDL cannot endorse or oppose candidates but the AzCDL PAC can and will.

With your financial support, the AzCDL PAC will work to keep a pro-rights majority in the state legislature, county boards of supervisors and city councils, ensuring that our long list of legislative successes protecting your *right to keep and bear arms* will get even longer!

—Michael Gibbs
AzCDL President

Promoting Our Rights into the Future

It is now a score of years since AzCDL was founded, and we have never been more effective. We have a full time lobbyist, a legal branch cooperating with both locally and nationally known and respected legal organizations, a new Political Action Committee, and a foundation dedicated to teaching the *FASTER Saves Lives* program to school personnel. Not bad for starting with four guys at the Five And Diner in Chandler and \$1200, no?

There are many facets to AzCDL, with lots of moving parts. We have an active corps of coordinators around the state, some now covering specialty fields such as gun shops, veterans groups, and even a statewide liaison between the coordinators and the BoD, who also helps manage inventory in both Phoenix and Tucson.

AzCDL has a communication/media coordinator to maintain a public face for the organization and that is today's topic. For 20 years, the main duty of presenting us to the media and drafting op-eds and responses to articles about us, has fallen to...me.

Our Board of Directors learned a lot of hard lessons from the passing of our Founding President, Dave Kopp. He left the organization on very good footing, yet we learned from the experience that for AzCDL to flourish into the future, we must have a succession plan and good documentation of all functions and procedures of the group. To that end, we now have a table manual, consisting of our policies to run a recruiting table and make them all appear similarly throughout the state. We have a document detailing our member outreach procedures including our e-mail and RTS methods. I wrote a policy manual for how to conduct AzCDL's publicity operations. Lots more moving parts...

We need new talent to fill the role of communications coordinator, someone who is comfortable with X, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Rumble, and other evolving social media, and monitor same for us. It would help if the new person had some broadcast, public relations, or spokesman experience. A retiring military publicity officer would probably be excellent. One has to be media savvy and able to speak in sound bites. A good general knowledge of Arizona gun laws is helpful. The morbidly verbose need not apply...it's not so much about being eloquent, as it is able to think on your feet.

There is a steep learning curve but, as the guy who created the role, I can coach you through it. Anyone who is interested in this work should reach out to me. I'll send you the publicity manual and begin the process of presenting candidates to the Board. The reward for this work is fantastic—when your time to find a successor comes, you will know that you helped preserve the *right to keep and bear arms* in Arizona for the next generation. If you find that thrilling, you have the first qualification for the job.

—Charles Heller
AzCDL Communications Coordinator

At last year's AzCDL annual meeting, Charles Heller announced his intention to retire as AzCDL Communications Coordinator and asked for those with an interest in assuming the role to contact him for more information.

We are still looking for the right person to serve as the media voice of AzCDL. If you have a background in media, public relations, or related fields, please contact Charles and discuss with him what the job entails.

Gun Owners of America Hosts AZ Freedom Festival

Gun Owners of America is excited to announce **AZ Freedom Festival 2025, March 1st, at the State Capital, 10AM-4PM.** The event was previously called *Protect & Defend the 2nd Amendment Rally* and was hosted by RidersUSA.

Last July, Riders USA reached out to GOA State Director, Cyn Ladd, with the offer of turning the event over to GOA and she jumped at the opportunity! "This event represents the core foundation of Gun Owners of America," stated Ms Ladd. "Our platform is 'No Compromise' on any legislation involving the 2nd Amendment".

GOA expects to bring national firearm vendors to sponsor several events, along with state and local sponsors with exhibit booths, a kids zone, local entertainment and celebrity influencers. New this year will be two \$500 scholarships awarded to high school seniors. GOA will also be bringing their merchandise store which features something for everyone. There will be a firearm raffle and drawings throughout the day for free merchandise.

Volunteers will be needed for the event. A new volunteer program has been created just for this event with training online initially then in person prior to March 1. Click here to sign up: <https://forms.office.com/r/g9abqb7BZB> (contact Cyn if you have any trouble signing up). All volunteers will receive a GOA t-shirt and a swag bag!

Follow GOA AZ Freedom Festival on Facebook <<https://www.facebook.com/GOAAZFREEDOMFESTIVAL>> and Instagram <<https://www.instagram.com/gunownersarizona/>>.

GOA invites all AzCDL members to join GOA at a discounted rate for an annual membership. For join, visit <https://donate.gunowners.org/az01/>.

For more information on the Freedom Festival and vendor opportunities, contact Cyn Ladd, AZ State Director GOA, 507-381-9797. Ms. Ladd resides in Surprise AZ and is a member of AzCDL.

As part of the Freedom Festival, GOA, AzCDL and MMP Guns are raffling off a hand-polished, laser-engraved Colt 1911 in .45ACP, valued at \$7,000!



Drawing will be held March 1, 2025 at Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza

1700 W. Washington St. Phoenix, AZ 85007

*Need not be present to win

RAFFLE TICKETS

1 - \$10
3 - \$25

\$7,000 VALUE!



COLT 1911 .45ACP
HAND POLISHED
LASER ENGRAVED
CUSTOM MADE BY MMP GUNS

Donated by MMP Guns raffle tickets available at www.mmpguns.com

You do not need to be present to win!

Be sure to check the box indicating that you heard it from AzCDL!



GOA ARIZONA

For more info, call
Cyn Ladd
507-381-9797
AZ State Director GOA

Raffle brought to you by:



To purchase raffle tickets, visit <https://shop.mmpguns.com>

Copper Dome Update

Arizona's 2024 Legislative Session: A Mid-Session Update for Firearm Owners

The Arizona legislative session is in full swing, with 1,678 bills introduced so far. As always, AzCDL is on the front lines, ensuring that your rights as firearm owners are protected and expanded. Here's where things stand at this point in the session.

Pro-2A Legislation Moving Forward

We are actively tracking 42 bills. Thirteen of these support your *right to keep and bear arms* and are working their way through the legislative process. These bills cover a range of issues, from strengthening state pre-emption violation penalties to restoring constitutionally-based firearm protections. Through strategic engagement, we've successfully amended four bills to make them even stronger and more effective in safeguarding your rights.

The Anti-Firearm Agenda: 29 Attacks on Freedom

On the other side, 29 anti-firearm, anti-freedom bills were introduced this session. These bills, pushed by anti-firearm legislators, aimed to chip away at your right to keep and bear arms. However, our advocacy efforts, along with the support of pro-2A lawmakers, have kept the vast majority of these bills from gaining traction. In fact, only one of these 29 bills even made it to a committee hearing.



This is a testament to the strength of our movement. The reality in Arizona is clear: gun control advocates may introduce legislation, but they do not have the support necessary to advance their agenda.

What Comes Next?

While we have been successful in blocking anti-firearm legislation so far, the fight is far from over. The legislative session is ongoing, and we must remain vigilant to ensure that no bad bills slip through and that our pro-rights bills continue to advance.

One insidious way for anti-rights bills to spring up at this point in the process is called a strike-all amendment or "striker." A striker replaces the entire text of a bill with something completely different—and potentially dangerous.

AzCDL is leading the charge, but we need your help to keep up the momentum. Stay engaged. Contact your legislators. Spread the word. When we stand together, we win.

Stay tuned for more updates and thank you for being a part of the fight for freedom in Arizona!

See you downrange.

—Michael Infanzon, EPIC Policy Group
AzCDL Chief Lobbyist

Celebrating the 20 Year Anniversary of AzCDL!

Some of you may know me as the volunteer coordinator for AzCDL that dresses in western garb. My name is Colleen Bathe and I have volunteered to lead the team planning the 2025 AzCDL Annual Meeting. This year's meeting marks the organization's 20th anniversary!

The meeting will be held in Tucson on October 25, 2025. Please put this on your calendar.

AzCDL has a lot to be proud of and has a long list of successes over the last 20 years.

We are looking for help to make the 20-year anniversary memorable. I have been meeting with the AzCDL Board Members to start planning for this event. An excellent keynote speaker has been booked. In addition to door prizes, raffles and guest speakers, we aim to have some interactive activities as well. If you have other ideas, I am interested in hearing them.

AzCDL Communications Coordinator Charles Heller has already secured three sponsors for the event. We are looking for additional sponsors and vendors. If you have guns, ammo or other items you would like to donate for door prizes, raffles, or auc-



tions, please contact me.

If you'd like to be a part of the planning team, or you have ideas, please contact me:

Colleen Bathe
batheAZUSA@proton.me
(559) 769-5600

I would like input from those of you outside of the Tucson area, too.

Please help us make this a great celebration for our members!

—Colleen Bathe
AzCDL Volunteer Coordinator



Where Do We Go From Here?

While not a member of the AzCDL founding group, I've served with all of them. Our strategy has always been to work quietly behind the scenes to influence the legislature to pass laws restoring our liberty, quash bills restricting it, and repeal those in place denying it. We are a force multiplier, channeling the voices of many into a coordinated message to our 'hired help' (after all, legislators are supposed to be working for us) to maintain and increase our liberty. Per Article 2, Section 2 of the Arizona Constitution, "All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights."

We have always been a lobbying organization, not a publicity seeking group. Our successes have been accomplished quietly, behind the scenes; building trust not only with our friends in the legislature, but also with the opposition. They might not agree with us, they might even dislike us, but for two decades, they've learned they can trust us.

In the past we've sent a simple, 5 question 'test' to both seated legislators and prospective candidates on one topic and one topic only: their belief in, and support for, the right of the people to keep and bear arms. Based on their answers—yes/yes but.../no, or no reply—you could make educated choices on who would represent you in the legislature. We didn't endorse candidates, we just presented you with the facts.

We've learned the hard way that nothing is permanent and our continued survival is going to depend on our leaders finding, training, and nurturing their replacements, on finding 'specialists' whose expertise can support new technologies and find better ways to do what we do now. We need to expand our reach: Gun show attendance is down, which means recruiting at gun shows is down. Where else can we reach 'our people'? Political organizations? Veterans, service, community organizations? Rodeos? If you know of a contact to get us in to speak at meetings or set up a table at events, please—don't wait for someone else to suggest it. Make arrangements if you can and let us know so we can support the effort, or at least pass on the contact information so one of us can.

This is your organization, these are your freedoms we're protecting. Help us help you.

—Duke Schechter
AzCDL Director



Press Release on Joe Foss Range

A December press release reads, in part: December 19, 2024

Jason Berry | 602-506-7232 | Jason.Berry@maricopa.gov

Maricopa County and the City of Buckeye are announcing a new partnership to reopen the Joe Foss Shooting Complex at Buckeye Hills Regional Park. An Intergovernmental Agreement, approved unanimously today by the Board of Supervisors, gives Buckeye exclusive rights to manage the popular shooting range, which has been closed for public use since early July when a Special Use Agreement with the previous operator expired.

"We heard loud and clear: people want this range back open to the public as soon as possible. But look, we had to do it right," said Supervisor Steve Gallardo, who represents District 5, where the range is located. "By choosing the City of Buckeye, we get a long-term Agreement with a community partner who has a stake in the complex's success. My colleagues and I believe that will bring stability and predictability to operations, ultimately benefiting everyone from law enforcement trainees to ordinary residents."

Under the agreement, the City of Buckeye will operate and manage the facility for both law enforcement training and public use. The city will also assume responsibility for maintenance, repairs, and any necessary capital improvements to ensure the facility meets all local, regional, state and federal safety requirements. The Agreement requires the City to open the range to the public at least three days a week.

The Buckeye City Council approved the 20-year management use agreement with Maricopa County Parks and Recreation on Tuesday.

"The Joe Foss Shooting Range adds another exceptional recreational amenity for our residents while supporting the outdoor adventure goals outlined in our Parks and Recreation Master Plan," said Buckeye Mayor Eric Orsborn. "This facility provides a safe and controlled environment for recreational shooters, helping preserve our deserts and ensuring a more responsible use of outdoor spaces."

Since the complex's closure, Maricopa County Parks has worked closely with an independent firm on range remediation, work is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year. The City of Buckeye will staff the complex and determine when and how to open the range.

Find updates at buckeyeaz.gov/joefoss.

Litigation Update

Last year, AzCDL announced that we now have another weapon in our arsenal—litigation. Here are updates on the issues we are currently working.

PIMA COUNTY

AzCDL was victorious in our case against a Pima County ordinance that violated the state preemption statutes! See *VICTORY In Pima County!* on page 1 for more details.

CITY OF PHOENIX

Phoenix Ordinance S-50010, intended to transfer 500-600 unclaimed firearms to the National Police of Ukraine, faced significant legal challenges including a complaint filed under SB1487 by Representatives Quang Nguyen and Selina Bliss.

In response, the Phoenix City Council repealed the ordinance, although the firearms have not been returned or sent to auction as required by state law.

CITY OF SEDONA

Sedona appears to also be in violation of ARS§13-3108 (state preemption statute) with ordinance 12.30.090 which prohibits carrying firearms in parks, on trails, or in open spaces. Representative Quang Nguyen filed a complaint with the Attorney General's office and wrote to the mayor and city council members urging them to bring the ordinance into compliance with state law. The council has amended the ordinance and, although the new version is an improvement, AzCDL believes it is still in violation of state preemption statutes and have asked Representative Nguyen to re-instate his complaint to the Attorney General.

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