


Rotary District 5495



Rotary Youth Exchange

Rotary District 5495, Arizona, U.S.A.

Rotary Youth Exchange Program

Donna Goetzenberger – Rotary Youth Exchange Chair

RYE5495@gmail.com

March 23, 2022

Dear Rotarians:

Yesterday, was quite the exciting day for our District and Rotary Youth Exchange.

BACKGROUND

In 2016, our District's Youth Exchange leaders joined in with another exchange program, seeking change in our Arizona law to support our J-1 visa exchange student programs. At the time, our Arizona high schools could not get state funding for youth exchange students as part of a school's Average Daily Attendance (ADA) or also known as Average Daily Count (ADC). With the assistance and support of Sen. John Kavanagh (R, LD 23) who sponsored the Legislation, our District Youth Exchange leaders we were successful in their endeavor and were able to get the law changed such that if a program had an outgoing and an incoming exchange student, the incoming student could be counted as part of the school's reported ADA number and, thereby, receive state funding for the incoming student.

See A.R.S. 15-823(E):

15-823. Admission; residents of other school districts; nonresidents of this state; tuition

D. The governing board may admit nonresident foreign students who are in exchange programs without payment of tuition or as it may otherwise prescribe.

E. Notwithstanding subsection D of this section, beginning in the 2016-2017 school year the governing board may admit the same number of nonresident foreign students who are in exchange programs and who are recipients of a J-1 visa pursuant to federal law, that is equal to the number of resident students enrolled in that local education agency who are currently participating in a foreign exchange program, as determined by the department, without the payment of tuition.

Unfortunately, even with that change, it continues to be an upset to our J-1 youth exchange programs here in Arizona, in that Arizona is the only state in the Western US that does not allow public schools to receive state funding for all of our J-1 visa exchange students. Again, the law that passed in 2016, allows for 1 and 1 - *with same placement*.

Even with the change in law in 2016, exchange programs still have a major hurdle in finding schools in which to place students. Many times, we are forced to seek placement of our J-1 students in schools that ***are not the same of the outbound student***. There are many issues and obstacles involved in school placements. In addition to the standard public high schools within our communities, some of our outbounds students are from online schools, charter schools, private schools, and some are even home schooled. Also, some obstacles that we are forced to overcome include placement at schools where we have more than one vetted and approved host family. And, some schools just refuse to take exchange students for various reasons.

In addition, the 1 for 1 scenario does not allow for the extra inbound students that we many times are asked to accept into our program. For instance, some of you may recall meeting inbound Maria (Maci) Rosario Rivas, from Venezuela. She is the daughter of a Rotarian (Rotary Club Tariba) and applied to be a Rotary Youth Exchange student in 2018. Although Venezuela is certified to both send and host students, we currently do not send students to Venezuela. As such, Maci was an “extra” inbound that our District agreed to host – a 0 to 1 exchange.

PRESENT

In November 2021, I was contacted by Angela Cotera, proposing that it was time again to attempt to change the law so that all public schools could receive the ADA funding for J-1 visa students. She asked for our help and participation. In turn, I reached out to Dave Howell (Phoenix Rotary 100) knowing that Dave has been a long-time supporter for our District’s Rotary Youth Exchange program. In short time, I discovered that Dave and Angela were the key players to getting the law changed in 2016. Soon thereafter, Dave and I, and Angela and another AFS representative Judy Appleyard, met over zoom and established a “game plan”.

On November 22, we were able to get a meeting with Senator Christine Marsh (D, LD 28/Scottsdale), and Senator Stephanie Stahl Hamilton (D, LD 10/Tucson), to discuss the matter and a solution. It was determined that we needed to seek more support and influence from our Legislators.

On January 27, 2022, Dave Howell met with Sen. T.J. Shope and discussed proposed language for amending A.R.S. 15-823(E). The window for introducing a new bill was closed, so pursuing the amendment strategy was our remaining option. Dave reported that Sen. Shope was optimistic. Once we had the bill number we would then start working with Sen. Shope and other legislators in hope of getting it passed. Within the following week, we had staffers working on our legislation.

Hi Dave and Angela,

I wanted to update you on the status of the J1 visa language you all brought to Senator Shope. I found a home for it and have attached the language for you to see. Section 1 of the bill contains the changes; we basically took out the 1:1 language regarding outbound and incoming students and added language allowing foreign exchange students to be funded. The remaining sections of the bill are unrelated to this issue so don't worry about those. The bill will be heard in Senate Education on Tuesday around 2pm. It would be great if someone could sign in supporting the strike everything amendment and be there to testify in support as well. Let me know if I can provide any additional details.

Thank you!



Brooke White
Arizona State Senate | Senior Policy Advisor
office | 602.926.3757

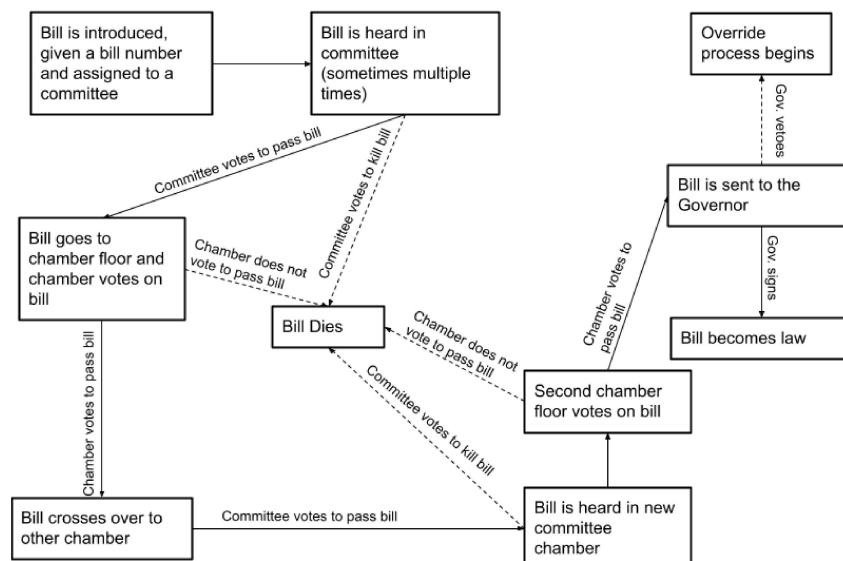
Below is the Proposed Senate Amendment to S.B. 1361, provided to us by Brooke White, Senior Policy Advisor:

Senate Amendments to S.B. 1361

1 E. Notwithstanding subsection D of this section, beginning in the
2 ~~2016-2017~~ 2022-2023 school year the governing board may admit ~~the same~~
3 ~~number of~~ nonresident foreign students who are in exchange programs and who
4 are recipients of a J-1 visa pursuant to federal law, ~~that is equal to the~~
5 ~~number of resident students enrolled in that local education agency who are~~
6 ~~currently participating in a foreign exchange program, as determined by the~~
7 ~~department,~~ without the payment of tuition. NOTWITHSTANDING SECTION
8 15-901, A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR A CHARTER SCHOOL MAY INCLUDE THESE STUDENTS IN
9 THE DISTRICT'S OR CHARTER SCHOOL'S STUDENT COUNT AND MAY OBTAIN STATE
10 FUNDING FOR THESE STUDENTS.

In light of the above, we had our Bill (to be sponsored by Sen. Shope) and a committee hearing. The Senate Education Committee hearing was scheduled for February 15, 2022. Following statements provided by Dave Howell (Rotary) and Judy Appelyard (AFS) at that Committee hearing, the Senate committee supported the amendment to SB 1361.

Next it was to go to the Senate floor for vote. On Thursday, February 24, 2022, the Bill passed out of the Senate with a 28/0/2 vote and was subsequently transmitted to the House of Representatives on Friday.



On March 3, 2022, we learned that our Bill was on the House Education Committee's Agenda scheduled for Tuesday, March 8th. That day, Dave Howell spoke with the legislative staff lead for the committee, who advised that he did not see much opposition likely, but he did ask for information as to potential fiscal impact.

On March 14, Dave met with Rep. Udall. Unfortunately, Dave reported to the rest of us that the issue was going to be \$\$\$\$. Dave advised that Reps. Pingerelli, Diaz, Nguyen, and Fillmore expressed concerns. We had our work cut out for us, Dave tasked us with "flipping" one or two of those Representatives by Wednesday, when Rep. Udall would set the agenda for the next and final committee hearing. Phone call outreach and emails were, realistically, all that we had time for at that point so we all got to work. The following day, March 16, we discovered that our efforts paid off, and that we were on the House Education Committee Agenda for Tuesday, March 22.

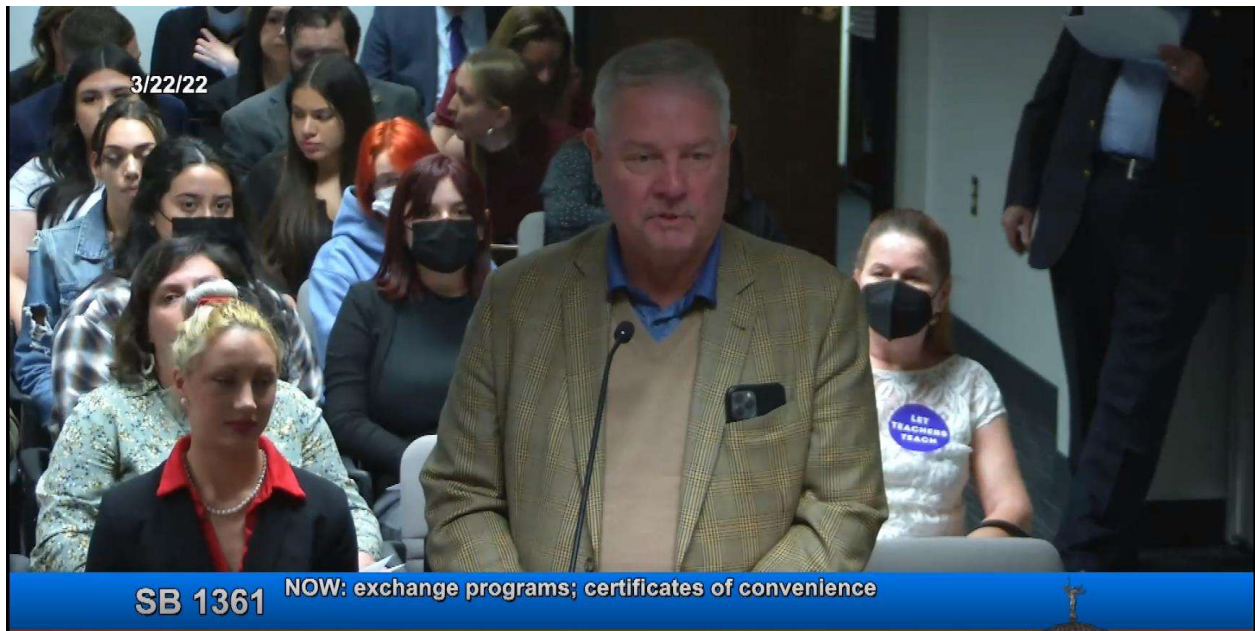
At that point, we continued in our endeavors of seeking more support with citizen commentary. Emails were sent and calls were made. One of the most important things we were able to do was to identify supportive community leaders all over the State and make those connections. We have many Rotarians and other grassroots supporters to thank for their efforts including, but not limited to, Chuck Flint (Mesa West) for connecting with Rep. Udall, Teresa Lucas (Peoria North) for her calls and emails to Rep. Pingerelli, Ken Kelly's connection with Rep. Osborne, etc., Kevin Pitts email to his Representative in Prescott, and many other host families and supporters of youth exchange who reached out to their legislators regarding this matter.

One possibility that was of concern was an amendment to strip the J-1 portion from the Bill, and leave the other half to be introduced. How quickly we would see that concern, become a reality. Monday morning, Dave advised that the amendment he feared might appear was on the agenda and would strip the J-1 section from the Bill.

After a week spent with a flurry of action seeking support through calls and emails, Tuesday, March 22nd came fast.



After introduction, Senator Paul Boyer presented and stated, “Members, it would be my preference to keep the J-1 visa in. This is a program that has been around since WWII, these kids are vetted by the U.S. State Department, it’s a wonderful exchange program that we send our kids overseas, they stay with families, and vice versa. This was brought to me by Senator Shope.” Then began the supporters providing all of their statements.



In addition to the crew of Dave, Angela, Judy, and myself, we had many others appearing to speak, and give statements from the heart:

Bret McKeand, District Governor:



Sarah Murphy, on behalf of AFS, daughter of Rotarian Jay Murphy (Phoenix Rotary 100):



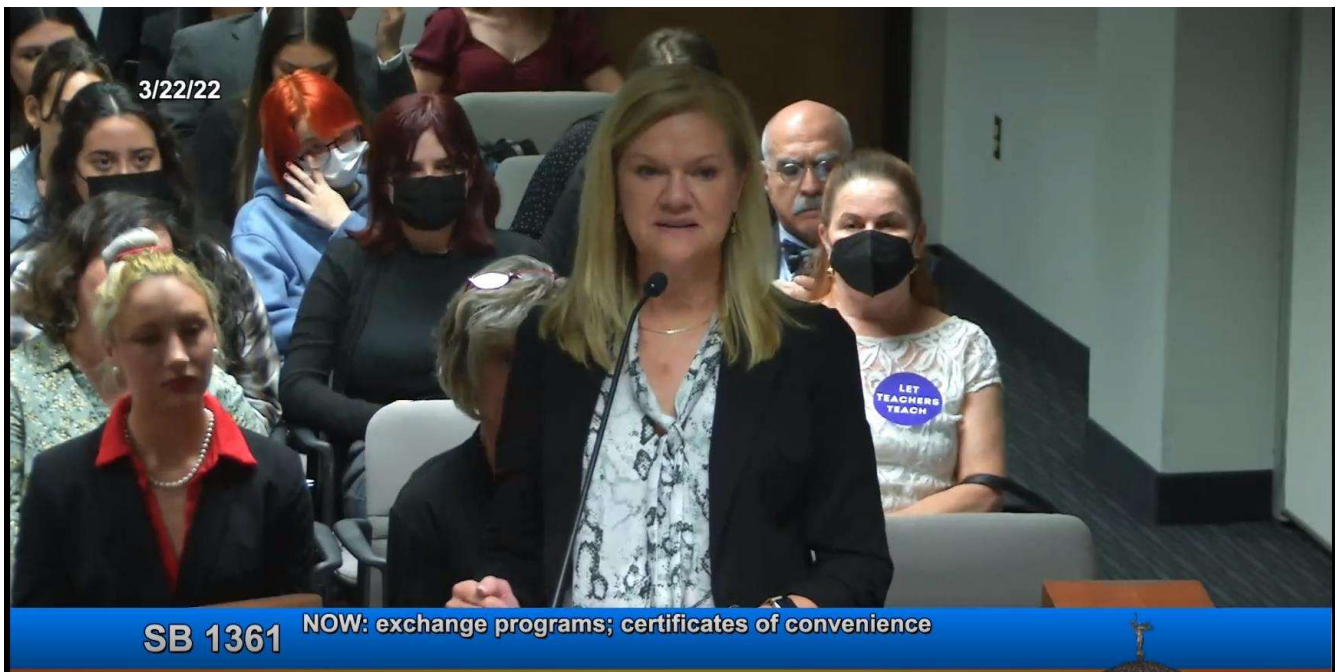
Paige Goetzenberger, daughter of Rotarians Donna and Bryan Goetzenberger (Mesa West), Rotary Youth Exchange Outbound to Austria 2019-20:



Maci Rosario Rivas, Rotary Youth Exchange Inbound from Venezuela 2018-19:



Teresa Lucas (Peoria Rotary), mother of Outbound Avery Lucas 2018-19, and host parent to many inbound exchange students:

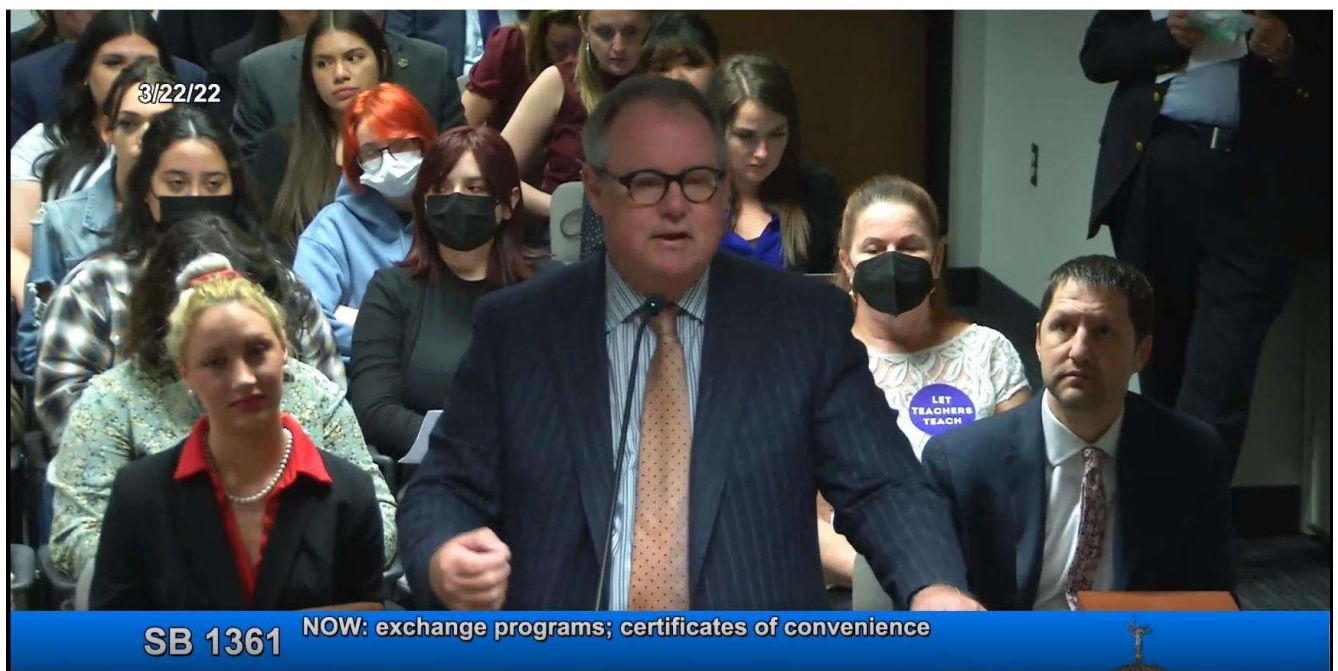


Polly Cady (Mesa West), host family of 5 prior youth exchange students:



Allan Cady (Mesa West) appeared for support, but did not speak

Marc Osborn and Karen Kruse, host parents to Maci





Following those statements, Madam Chair Udall advised that she would be withdrawing the amendment of removing the J-1 visa portion from the Bill for now. “Without objection, the amendment is withdrawn. Then the motion before you is to have the Bill unamended. Members the Bill before you is that SB1361 be returned with a due pass recommendation.” A vote was called, which Madam Chair Udall confirmed, “Members by your vote of 9 aye, 1 nay, 0 present, 0 absent, you have given Senate Bill 1361 a Due Pass Recommendation.”

Whew, I believe we all considered that a win!!!! For the time being anyway.

Now we are all on pins and needles and keeping our fingers crossed, hoping that it passes on the House Floor.

At the end of a stressful (albeit educational) afternoon, House of Representatives Sgt. at Arms Chuck Fitzgerald, Rotarian (Peoria Rotary), met us and hosted us on a wonderful tour to the House Floor. He proudly pointed out the sound barriers that were turned into beautiful artistic pieces showcasing the landscape of the Grand Canyon, he gave us some fun facts about our wonderful state, and he encouraged our taking of pictures! (You can’t go anywhere with Rotarians without pictures taken!)



If you are interested in viewing the proceedings, you can go to:

<https://invintus-client-media.s3.amazonaws.com/6361162879/cd4f5232ba69c37218f51038d42e0678f107ac49.mp4>

I do have one ask for my fellow Rotarians - because Rotary is so supportive of international exchange and so widespread throughout the state, it has a great opportunity for outreach. **Please take a moment of your time to make the calls and send an email to your District Representative.** It is easy to do a simple internet search to find your Arizona District Representative – email addresses and phone numbers are easy to find on the Representative pages. We are so very close to getting this Bill passed and we would very much appreciate your support on this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, suggestions, or personal contacts or connections, who may be of assistance.

To be continued . . .

Donna Goetzenberger
Rotary Youth Exchange Chair
District 5495
(602) 469-1293
RYE5495@gmail.com