



Arizona State Senate
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Letter to the Editor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



A recent article by Howard Fischer criticizing and speculating about my decision not to hear HB 2436 January 8th memorial in my committee warrants some clarification. HB 2436 appropriates \$2.5 million of taxpayer funds toward the construction of a memorial honoring the Tucson January 8th shooting victims. The January 8th, 2011 shooting in Tucson was a horrific and tragic event, and I am not opposed to this memorial. The decision not to hear HB 2436 was in no way a partisan or a political stance.

Currently, all memorials approved and placed at the State Capitol Mall areas are constructed using private funds and donations. No taxpayer funds are expended. The Tucson January 8th monument can continue to be financed through fundraising and private citizen contributions, just like the memorials at the State Capitol Mall.

I received many calls and emails from my constituents and others asking that HB 2436 not move forward. They did not want taxpayer monies spent on this. In fact, Pima County had a ballot measure, Prop 427, in 2015 for \$25 million of public monies to be spent on this project, along with several other projects, and it failed with only 34% of the vote. Now they want the Legislature to overturn the people's vote and voice!

Questions were asked on how this foundation has spent the \$1.7 million already raised. What salaries are paid and what overhead and detailed plans for the project are completed? Who pays for the management and maintenance of the project? Additional information on the foundations reporting to IRS can be accessed at <https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/copies-of-scanned-co-returns-available>.

The state of Arizona has limited general fund monies and many obligations; schools, healthcare, corrections, transportation and more. We are still recovering from the economic downturn. We are trying to be responsible to the hard working taxpayers, their money and make the best decisions we can.

The Tucson January 8th memorial can move forward with private contributions and donations.

Thank you,

Gail Griffin

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