

AZ Common Sense Newsletter

1-9-2026

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WILL APS HOUSEHOLD CUSTOMERS FUND CORPORATE DATA CENTERS?

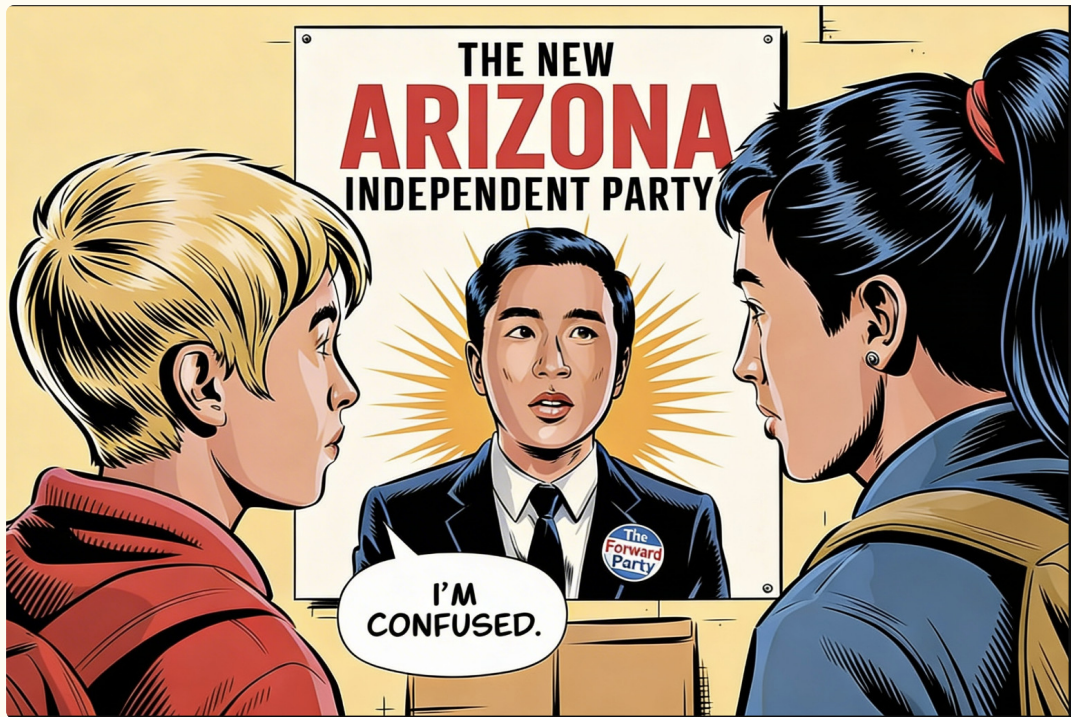


In June 2025, Arizona Public Service (APS), the state's largest electric utility, filed a proposal with the Arizona Corporate Commission (ACC) seeking an approximate 14% net increase in retail rates, which would generate about \$580 million in additional revenue if fully approved. This adjustment, aimed at funding grid modernization, reliability enhancements, renewable energy expansion, and rising demand from population growth and industries like data centers would add roughly \$20 to the monthly bill of a typical residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours - though actual impacts vary by usage and plan. As of early 2026, the multi-year public review process is ongoing, with public comment sessions underway and a final decision pending; any approved changes would not take effect until the second half of 2026 at the earliest.

Currently Arizona enjoys a low cost of electricity on the order of 15-16 cents per kilowatt hour. This compares to a national average of roughly 18 cents per kilowatt hour while California with its strong emphasis on renewables is on the order of 34 cents per kilowatt hour.

The rate hike above is primarily driven (50-70%) by demand growth of which data centers are a key part. Roughly 15% of the hike is due to a continued emphasis on renewable energy. If you are concerned that you will be funding demand growth caused by data centers or that APS continues down a costly pathway on renewables similar to California, make your voice heard. More information and ways to contact the ACC on this rate change request can be found in the [Public Notice of Hearing](#).

Arizona's Independent Party Controversy: Name Change Sparks Lawsuits and Voter Confusion



Arizona politics heated up in late 2025 when the former **No Labels Party** rebranded as the **Arizona Independent Party** (AIP). Approved by Democratic Secretary of State Adrian Fontes in October and effective December 1, the change has triggered bipartisan lawsuits alleging voter confusion and legal overreach.

Key Connections and Goals—The AIP, led by former Phoenix Mayor Paul Johnson, partnered in November 2025 with Andrew Yang's national **Forward Party** — a group pushing for third-party alternatives. This alliance provides AIP candidates with national infrastructure like polling and voter data for 2026 races. The Forward Party, co-founded by Yang, focuses on what critics and supporters alike call "**Andrew Yang's Wishlist**": core electoral reforms including ranked-choice voting (RCV), open/nonpartisan primaries, independent redistricting, and approval voting.

The Core Controversy: Voter Confusion—Critics argue the name "Arizona Independent Party" misleadingly mirrors the common term for unaffiliated ("independent") voters. Arizona registration forms already list "Independent" as no-party preference, potentially tricking people into joining a party unintentionally. This could restrict them to AIP primaries and bar them from signing petitions for major-party candidates. As well, while not definitively ruled a "violation of law", the automatic change to No Labels voters' registered party name without their explicit consent or prior notice is core to the disputes, raising concerns about transparency and voter intent.

The Lawsuits—Three major suits challenge Fontes' approval, claiming he lacked authority and bypassed requirements for new parties (e.g., signature gathering):

- **Citizens Clean Elections Commission** (Dec 2025): Seeks to void the change, citing "widespread voter confusion."

- **Arizona Democratic Party** (Dec 2025): Argues it harms ballot clarity and competition.
- **Arizona Republican Party & RNC** (Dec 2025): Calls it an unlawful "backdoor" maneuver threatening election integrity.

As of January 2026, cases remain pending in state courts. The Arizona AG defends Fontes. AIP leaders vow countersuits, framing challenges as attacks on association rights.

Broader Implications—Proponents see the AIP as an option for disillusioned voters, amplified by Yang's reform agenda. Detractors view it as deceptive, potentially splitting votes in this swing state. Voters originally registered under "No Labels" without being informed their affiliation could be repurposed under a different name and potentially different leadership/platform. The outcome could shape third-party viability nationwide—or reinforce barriers against them.

Is this voter protection or partisan suppression? The courts will decide, but Arizona's independents are watching closely.

Thank You to the City of Peoria Leadership Team: A Legacy of Visionary Leadership and Economic Transformation



As Peoria residents reflect on the past few years, the City of Peoria Leadership Team stands out for its transformative guidance and bold vision.

In December 2025, Jason Beck, the current mayor, announced he would not seek reelection in 2026, choosing to focus on family and personal business commitments. While this signals a transition in leadership, it is the perfect moment to celebrate the extraordinary contributions made under this administration to our city and state.

The City of Peoria Leadership Team brought a business-minded, innovative approach to City Hall, guided by the principle: "Innovate or Die." Drawing from military service, entrepreneurial experience, and a deep understanding of job creation, the team promised to unlock Peoria's full potential—and delivered in ways that have reshaped our economy. Peoria has emerged as one of Arizona's fastest-growing economic hubs.

Strategic efforts focused on smart growth, public-private partnerships, and attracting high-tech industries have created thousands of quality jobs and

positioned our city for long-term prosperity.

Key highlights include: The Peoria Innovation Core: A groundbreaking 6,700-acre development along the Loop 303 corridor, made possible through a historic partnership with the Arizona State Land Department. This initiative not only reimburses the city up to \$500 million in infrastructure costs but is projected to generate up to \$1.5 billion for Arizona's public education system while driving massive economic development.

Major Investments and Job Creation: Securing Amkor Technology's advanced semiconductor packaging and testing facility in Peoria—a \$2 billion investment expected to create 2,000 high-wage jobs. This positions Peoria at the heart of Arizona's booming semiconductor industry, alongside giants like TSMC and Intel.

Pro-Business Reforms: Streamlining processes to make Peoria more attractive to investors, fostering an environment where businesses can thrive at the "speed of business." These accomplishments in just three years represent a game-changer for Peoria's future prosperity, unlike anything seen before in any Arizona city.

These efforts have not only boosted local employment but have elevated Arizona's economy on a national stage, bringing cutting-edge technology and innovation to the West Valley.

The Peoria Leadership Team has emphasized that its dedication continues through the remainder of the term. With over a year left, the administration has committed to a strong finish, ensuring the city is left stronger than ever. This service—rooted in discipline, family values, and entrepreneurial spirit—has inspired many and set a high standard for future leaders.

On behalf of grateful Peoria residents and Arizonans who have benefited from this vision, thank you to the City of Peoria Leadership Team for your tireless guidance, bold economic initiatives, and unwavering commitment to making Peoria the best it can be. Your legacy will fuel our growth for generations to come.

Here's to the next chapter for our leaders and for our incredible city!

Congressman Abe Hamadeh's Fight To Protect Luke Air Force Base From Downgrade



U.S. Representative Abraham "Abe" Hamadeh (R-AZ-08) is a freshman congressman, former U.S. Army Reserve intelligence officer, and prosecutor. Elected in 2024, he represents Arizona's 8th District, which

includes the area around Luke Air Force Base. As a veteran with service in the Middle East, Hamadeh serves on the House Armed Services Committee, where he advocates strongly for military readiness and Arizona's defense installations.

Standing Strong for Luke AFB and National Security-In 2025, Luke Air Force Base—the premier training hub for F-35 Lightning II pilots—faced a potential downgrade from the Department of War. The proposed change would reduce the 56th Fighter Wing commander's billet from a one-star general (brigadier general) to a colonel, part of broader efforts to trim senior leadership ranks. Congressman Abe Hamadeh quickly emerged as a leading voice against this "shortsighted decision." During a June 2025 House Armed Services Committee hearing, he directly questioned Air Force Chief of Staff General David W. Allvin, confirming the downgrade plans and highlighting Luke's irreplaceable role.

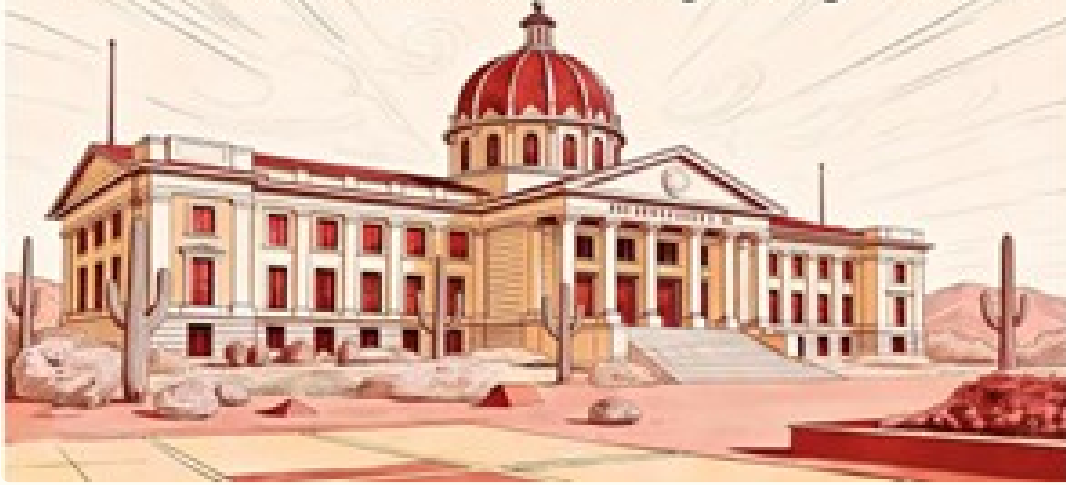
Hamadeh followed up with a strong letter to Secretary Pete Hegseth and General Allvin, emphasizing that Luke AFB trains 75% of the world's F-35 pilots and conducts 25% of global F-35 flight hours. The base supports integrated operations with five NATO allies and hosts the world's only F-35 International Intelligence Formal Training course. It also trains personnel from partner nations like Australia, Taiwan, Germany, Poland, Singapore, and soon Canada. "The men and women at Luke deserve the strongest representation possible," Hamadeh argued, noting the base's community of 7,000 active-duty members, 2,500 civilians, 89,000 DoD beneficiaries, and 9,000 retirees. He stressed that maintaining a general officer command preserves stature with international partners and supports America's edge in great power competition.

Delivering Results in the NDAA- Hamadeh's advocacy paid off. He led efforts to include protections in the Fiscal Year 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), requiring the Air Force Secretary to submit a detailed report on operational impacts, workforce demands, and costs before downgrading leadership at any major base like Luke. This bipartisan provision ensures thoughtful review rather than hasty cuts, safeguarding Luke's mission while addressing fiscal concerns. Hamadeh also secured improvements like reliable air conditioning for the base's facilities. Thanks to Congressman Hamadeh's proactive leadership, Luke Air Force Base remains positioned as a cornerstone of U.S. airpower. His commitment to our troops and national defense exemplifies putting Arizona—and America—first.

Luke AFB continues to "Train the World's Greatest Fighter Pilots," stronger than ever.

A Common Sense Roadmap Indeed

2026 AZ Senate Majority Plan



This plan, released on December 15, 2025, is the official legislative agenda for the Arizona Senate Republican Majority Caucus. It outlines the priorities for the upcoming 2026 legislative session, starting January 12, 2026.

Led by Senate President Warren Petersen, the plan focuses on restoring Arizona's strengths as an affordable, safe, and pro-business state. Republicans emphasize practical solutions to lower costs for families, enhance public safety, support economic growth, and increase government accountability.

Key Priorities in the 2026 Majority Plan:

Affordability and Cost of Living: Top focus on reducing housing costs through regulatory reform, speeding up construction permits, cutting fees, and overriding local barriers to new development. Also includes broader tax relief and measures to combat inflation.

Public Safety: Addressing prison staffing shortages, reforming the justice system (e.g., accountability for violent offenders), supporting law enforcement, and protecting Second Amendment rights.

Economic Growth and Regulatory Reform: Removing barriers to job creation, supporting businesses, and ensuring long-term fiscal stability with balanced budgets.

Water Security: Protecting Arizona's water resources, especially in Colorado River negotiations, and tying new development to sustainable water supplies.

Border Enforcement: Bolstering state efforts to support federal immigration policies and secure the border.

Transportation and Infrastructure: Investments to improve roads and highways

Education: Reforms to strengthen schools and empower parents.

Elections: Measures for integrity and efficiency.

Government Oversight: Increased accountability for state agencies, addressing mismanagement.

Senate Republicans frame the plan as a response to challenges like rising housing prices and living expenses, positioning it as a continuation of pro-growth policies. While the House Republicans align on many issues (e.g., affordability and deregulation), this specific "2026 Majority Plan" document comes from the Senate Caucus.

For the full details, visit the official Senate Republicans site:

<https://www.azsenaterepublicans.gov/press-releases/senate-republicans-unveil-2026-majority-plan-priorities-for-affordability-safe-communities-strong-economy-government-accountability>.

Arizona Venezuelans Celebrate With Prayer



On January 4, 2026, members of Arizona's Venezuelan community assembled at St. Louis the King Catholic Church in Glendale for celebration and prayer service during Sunday mass, one day following the U.S. capture of President Nicolás Maduro.

Attendees expressed profound relief, joy, and cautious optimism, viewing Maduro's removal—whom many described as a "terrorist" and dictator—as a potential turning point toward liberty, peace, and freedom after years of political persecution and hardship. One participant stated, "We just want liberty and peace," while others emphasized the ongoing tensions in Venezuela, where family members remain at risk.

Though Arizona's Venezuelan population is smaller than in regions like South Florida, the gathering mirrored positive sentiments in diaspora communities across the U.S. and abroad. The focus remained on prayers for a peaceful transition in their homeland rather than debates over the U.S. operation.

The event was covered by local media, including on-site reporting by FOX 10 Phoenix's Taylor Wirtz and AZFamily.

Recent Events That Give Us All The RIGHT Reasons For Optimism

AHOY! Affordability Is Headed Our Way!



While all good newsletters must come to an end, we leave you with this list of exciting recent events that, if enacted, give us hope for the economic relief that they will bring to EVERYONE!

We support these six actions proposed or advanced since December 25, 2025, aimed at improving the economy, pricing and affordability for the middle class:

- Directing the federal government to purchase \$200 billion in mortgage bonds using reserves from Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, with the goal of reducing mortgage rates and monthly payments to make homeownership more affordable.

- Proposing a ban on large institutional investors from buying single-family homes, intended to free up housing stock and make it easier for younger families to purchase their first homes.

- Reiterating a proposal for \$2,000 dividend payments (or equivalent tax rebates) to middle- and lower-income Americans, funded by tariff revenues, to provide direct financial relief and boost household spending power.

- Advancing changes to raise the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap from \$10,000 to \$40,000 for households earning under \$500,000, aiming to lower overall tax bills and increase disposable income for middle-class homeowners.

- Expanding the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit allocations to states (from 9% to 12% starting in 2026) to incentivize more construction of affordable rental housing and address housing shortages for middle-class families.

- Pressuring banks to cap credit card interest rate at 10% for one year.

STAY TUNED FOR MORE AS 2026 ROLLS ON!

info@azcommonsense.com <https://www.facebook.com/azcommonsense>

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