

AZ Politics

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Sanders talks gun control, equality at stop in Tucson

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THE REPUBLIC • AZCENTRAL.COM

TUCSON — With a shooting on an Arizona college campus dominating the headlines, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders called for expanded background checks for gun buyers at a rally here Friday night.

Sanders offered his condolences to the families of those affected by the shooting early Friday at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff. One student was killed, and three others were injured. A student was arrested in connection with the incident.

"We know we are tired of condolences," Sanders said, before later adding, "The issue of gun violence is not going to be solved easily. That doesn't mean we don't address it and do the best we can."

It was a somber moment in an otherwise rowdy rally that saw Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton's leading challenger focus on his now-trademark call for greater economic equality. The event, in central Tucson's Reid Park, drew a diverse crowd that parks officials estimated at 13,000.

Gun control is one of the few issues where Sanders, a senator from Vermont, finds himself to the right of Clinton. He has opposed several key pieces of gun-control legislation over the years.

He quickly shifted to his themes that have resonated with the liberal base.

"This is a people's campaign, not a billionaires' campaign," Sanders said, offering one of many lines that drew loud cheers over the course of more than an hour. "When we stand together there's nothing that can stop us from transforming this country."

"... The American people are saying we want an economy that works for people and not just for the very rich."

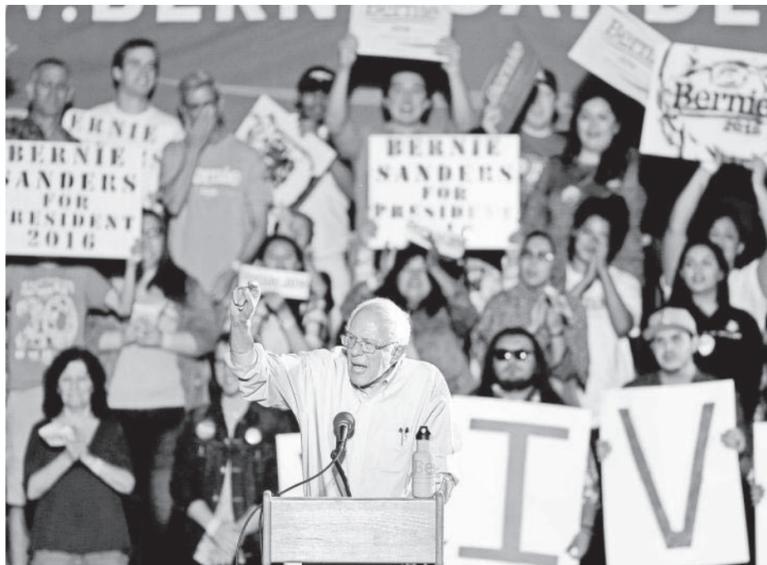
Noting the high unemployment rate among young people, Sanders said the nation is turning its back on an entire generation by not providing them with jobs. "Maybe it makes sense to invest in jobs and not in jails and incarceration," he said.

Sanders also called for comprehensive immigration reform to provide the nation's 11 million undocumented immigrants a pathway to citizenship.

"Today's undocumented workers play an extraordinarily important role in our economy," he said. "Without these people, it is likely our agricultural system would not work. They are a part of the fabric of this country."

As he talked about immigration, he delivered what appeared to be a veiled jab at Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, whose heated rhetoric on the issue has roiled the GOP primary. "In 2015, it is not acceptable to stoop to racism and demagoguery to win a political race," Sanders said.

Sanders was introduced at the event



MIKE CHRISTY/ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders drives home a point at his rally Friday in Tucson.

"The issue of gun violence is not going to be solved easily. That doesn't mean we don't address it and do the best we can."

BERNIE SANDERS
DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

by Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., who this week became the first member of Congress to endorse Sanders' candidacy.

"My colleagues said supporting Bernie was either wrong or not smart or a weak moment," the liberal congressman told the crowd. "My answer to my colleagues was, 'Why not?'"

Grijalva continued, "This campaign speaks to the collective future of America. ... We're going to take this great democracy of ours back."

Sander's stop is part of a western swing ahead of the first debate of the Democratic presidential campaign race. The debate is Tuesday in Las Vegas.

Nationally, Clinton still holds a sizable lead over Sanders, 42 percent to 25 percent, according to a Real Clear Politics average of recent surveys. But the two candidates have, of late, been trending in opposite directions, and Sanders leads Clinton in the key early-nominating state of New Hampshire, according to the website's polling average, and is within 6 points of her in Iowa, the first state to help choose a nominee. Tucson mirrors the kinds of cities — areas with large college-student popula-

tions, such as Seattle, Boston and Portland — where Sanders has drawn large, enthusiastic crowds in recent months.

Quinn Mark, 14, who attended the Tucson rally with his parents, said, "Bernie is more real. Bernie seems more passionate. When Hillary talks, everything seems fake and like a focus group."

His mother, Michelle Crow, 43, an independent, said she hadn't been following the race until Quinn persuaded her to give Sanders a close look.

Sanders is "one of the guys who says it like it is. It's really empowering," she said. "I really like his message about how the Republicans are hoping to win by division and that the answer to that is to come together."

Friday was Sanders' second stop in Arizona in less than three months.

In late July, he appeared at a Democratic presidential-candidate forum hosted by a liberal group at the Phoenix Convention Center, and later that day, he held a rally attended by more than 11,000 people. "Black Lives Matter" protesters took over the stage during the morning forum, calling attention to what they said was his failure to address issues of concern to the group. Black Lives Matter subsequently disrupted other Sanders events around the country.

Sanders' attention to Arizona seems to show he isn't ceding it to Clinton, even though her husband was the last Democratic presidential candidate to carry the state, almost 20 years ago. Hillary Clinton defeated then-Sen. Barack Obama in Arizona's 2008 presidential preference election, or primary.

POLITICAL INSIDER

Future might be bright even if the kids aren't

Future's so bright I gotta wear second-hand shades ... A study from Arizona State University makes the case for Gov. Doug Ducey's plan to withdraw more money from the state's Permanent Land Endowment Trust Fund.

Part of the rationale is life will be better in the future, so it makes sense to spend more money now on education rather than "hoarding" it for future generations of school kids. To reinforce that point, study author Scott Beaulier noted we're all living better today than we were years ago.

That was a head-scratcher for Andrew Morrill, president of the Arizona Education Association, the teacher's union.

"The middle class is losing earning power right now, they're losing their savings, the recession cost a lot of the middle class their homes, they're racking up debt and higher education is harder and harder to afford," Morrill said after he read the study from ASU's Center for Economic Liberty.

"Maybe if you get \$3 million from an anti-tax network, maybe life is better."

Ouch! That's a reference to the money the Charles Koch Foundation contributed to help ASU open the center last fall. And who was among the speakers at that opening ceremony? Gov-elect Ducey.

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And what exactly do you do? ... Gov. Doug Ducey is on a mission to get a handle on the state's 200-plus boards and commissions through an auditing process that could eliminate or consolidate some of them.

Arizona has dozens of regulatory boards that oversee licenses for physicians, cosmetologists and barbers. It also has boards, commissions and committees that research or advise on lettuce, grain, cotton, school buses and spinal and head injuries.

Ducey recently sent questionnaires to the groups' executive directors and board members. The governor asked questions about staffing, contractors, budgets and whether they think they are fulfilling their missions.

"One of the goals from the governor from Day One is getting a better handle on the existing boards and commissions and see if there's any opportunities," Daniel Scarpinato, Ducey's spokesman, said.

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Let me be brief ... State Republican legislative leadership has asked the Arizona Court of Appeals to hold off on the next steps toward resolving a 5-year-old lawsuit over K-12 district and charter school inflation funding.

They need more time because they have spent sooo much time working sooo hard to find a resolution and could be sooo close, according to court documents filed last week.

A lower court judge ruled the state must pay schools an additional \$331 million a year after not fully funding inflation costs during the recession. Legislative leaders are appealing that ruling. The first step is for attorneys for the two sides to file opening briefs.

"The Legislative Appellants and the Appellees, personally and through their staffs and counsel, have engaged in active and ongoing settlement discussions which have included regular participation of the staff of the Office of the Governor and which have required a heavy commitment of staff and counsel time and efforts," the brief stated. "Those discussions continue, their outcome is still uncertain, and yet they could lead to developments that materially alter issues in this appeal and/or ongoing proceedings below. Due to the heavy time commitment necessitated by the settlement discussions, counsel for the Legislative Appellants have been unable to complete the briefing efforts."

The appeals court has not set a date for lawyers to file those opening briefs, and the lawyers representing legislative leaders asked the judges not to.

"The procedure proposed here is needed to facilitate the complex legislative processes implicated in any settlement discussions," according to the brief.

These are the same parties that only a month ago threw up their hands in surrender after spending seven months trying unsuccessfully to reach a compromise.

Rumors of Ducey calling a special legislative session to address school funding have been circulating for weeks, but lawmakers say there are still disagreements even among Republicans about what an appropriate plan would look like.

Compiled by Republic reporters Mary Jo Pitzl, Alia Beard Rau and Yvonne Wingett Sanchez. Get the latest at politics.azcentral.com.

DAN NOWICKI

Clinton has put e-mail controversy to rest, ally says



A House GOP leader's comments suggesting a political motivation behind the House Select Committee on Benghazi were "icing on the cake" in Hillary Clinton's effort to overcome the controversy surrounding her use of a personal e-mail server while secretary of State, according to a key Clinton ally.

The Sept. 29 remarks by U.S. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., that the Benghazi committee had driven down Clinton's poll numbers and damaged her trustworthiness sparked a backlash and helped derail his bid to replace exiting U.S. House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio.

McCarthy got slammed by Republicans and Democrats alike for implying a partisan motive behind the investigation into the Sept. 11, 2012, terrorist attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, Libya, that left U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens and three other Americans dead.

Meanwhile, Clinton, the former secretary of State, is making progress on putting the e-mail questions to rest, said David Brock, the founder of the liberal advocacy organization Media Matters for America and, more recently, a Clinton-supporting Super PAC called Correct the Record.

"She, in an interview a few weeks ago, took responsibility for her part of this," Brock told *The Arizona Republic* in an interview in Phoenix. "And, second, as the e-mails get released, people see that they are benign. They're about skim milk in her tea. So the theory that she was hiding things with this one account ends up not making a lot of sense. And then the third thing is McCarthy identifying this as a political charade, which is what critics such as myself have been saying for a long time."

Brock was in the Valley to promote his latest book, "Killing the Messenger: The

Right-Wing Plot to Derail Hillary and Hijack Your Government," which he said contains material that will help Clinton supporters "talk about some of the issues surrounding her, some of the controversies."

Clinton on Tuesday will face her stronger-than-expected chief primary rival, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, in the first Democratic presidential debate in Las Vegas. Sanders has been drawing huge crowds around the country, including in Phoenix and Tucson. The possibility that Vice President Joe Biden might seek the party's nomination also has heightened the drama in a race where Clinton once appeared the inevitable victor.

"There are waverers, and I hope that we can persuade the waverers that she is the best candidate in the race on either side of the aisle," Brock said.

Fred DuVal, the 2014 Democratic nominee for governor, hosted Brock's Arizona book event.

In other developments: » The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee on Wednesday officially endorsed U.S. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick's candidacy for Arizona's U.S. Senate seat, an indication that other prominent Democrats are not likely to enter the party's primary.

Although U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema, D-Ariz., at one time was looking at the 2016 race, Kirkpatrick, a three-term U.S. representative from Flagstaff, so far faces only nominal opposition from little-known Democratic activist Leonard Clark.

Incumbent U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., has three Republican rivals for the GOP nomination.

"Throughout her career Ann Kirkpatrick has built a reputation as a common-sense leader who works across the aisle to fight for Arizona families, and today we are proud to endorse her in Arizona's

Senate race," U.S. Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., the DSCC chairman, said in a written statement.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee, which had been needling Kirkpatrick for months for failing to secure the DSCC endorsement, was not impressed.

"With her reckless support of Obamacare, the failed stimulus, and the disastrous Iran deal, Ann Kirkpatrick already faced an uphill climb in this campaign," NRSC spokesman Greg Blair said in a statement. "Now Kirkpatrick has lost the ability to claim any last shred of independence from her party bosses. After months of stalling, this tepid endorsement is nothing but a concession from national Democrats that they were unable to find a better candidate."

» Kirkpatrick and U.S. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., are headlining this year's Arizona Democratic Party Hall of Fame dinner. The annual fundraiser is set for Oct. 30 at the downtown Phoenix Convention Center.

» Former U.S. Rep. Ben Quayle, R-Ariz., is part of a just-launched Washington, D.C., lobbying firm, Hobart Hallaway & Quayle Ventures.

Quayle, the son of former Vice President Dan Quayle, served a single U.S. House term from 2011 to 2013.

In a bit of unfortunate timing, the Wednesday news release announcing the new HHQ Ventures pointed out that Quayle "counts Kevin McCarthy as his mentor."

On Wednesday, McCarthy was considered the front-runner to become the next House speaker. On Thursday, McCarthy withdrew from the race.

Nowicki is *The Republic's* national political reporter. Follow him on Twitter at @dannowicki and on his official Facebook page.