

PAY PERIOD ENDING

Ruben Callejo

REGULAR TIME			
1st Day	A.M.	IN	
	NOON	OUT	
	P.M.	OUT	
2nd Day	A.M.	IN	
	NOON	OUT	
	P.M.	OUT	

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

7th Day	P.M.	OUT	
	A.M.	IN	
	NOON	OUT	
	P.M.	OUT	
TOTAL			

FORM #TC-292

MADE IN THE U.S.A. 

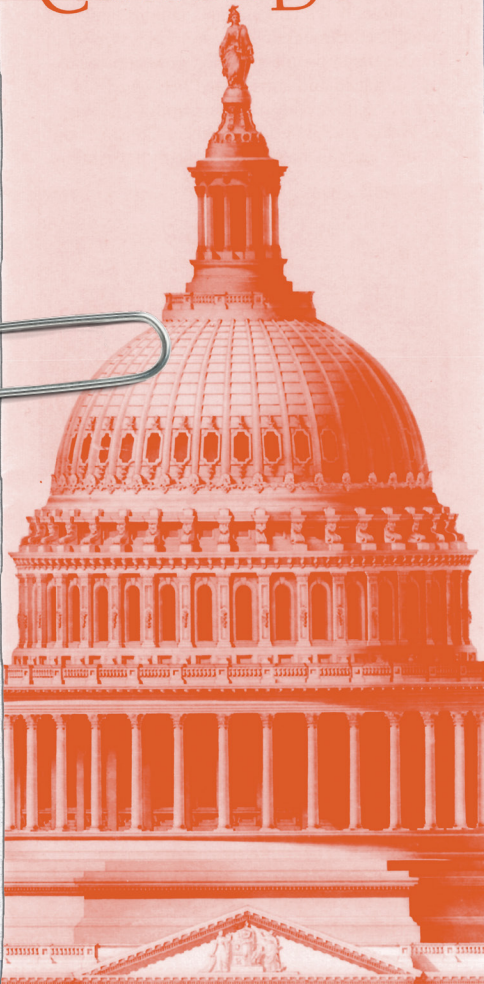
saving
the middle
class and
restoring the
american
dream.

NRG



Queremos
salir adelante

THE CAPITOL DOME



Executive Summary

Before becoming a Senator, I was just a working-class kid. My father walked out on our family, leaving my mom to raise my three sisters and me on a secretary's salary. As soon I was old enough to help out, I did. I worked on construction sites, at a hot dog stand, at a meat packing plant – any job I could find that fit in with my school schedule. I worked as hard as I could to help my family – picking up overtime hours, working night shifts, and saving as much as I could.

By the time I left for Harvard, I was able to help my mom buy a house and move out of our small, two-bedroom apartment. I was able to help my family live the American Dream.

I am angry that this dream is slipping away from millions of Arizonans. Over the last five years, wages for Arizona workers have risen by only one percent when adjusted for inflation.¹ Meanwhile, the richest Americans have experienced staggering increases in wealth – with the country's 977 billionaires now holding \$9.24 trillion, 32 percent more than the year before.² Beyond the headline-grabbing billionaires, the top 1 percent of Americans hold over \$50 trillion in wealth, and many exploit a tax code written by elite politicians that taxes their earnings far less than it taxes comparable wages.³

To address some of the most important cost spikes for Arizonans, I've proposed plans to bring down housing⁴ and energy⁵ costs. But we can't address the cost-of-living crisis while ignoring decades of wage suppression that has hollowed out the middle class. We must change the status quo for good – by confronting the outsized power of giant corporations and the rich to suppress wages, offshore jobs, and spike prices.

There's a saying in Spanish: “queremos salir adelante.” It means: “we want to get ahead.” It's a common saying in the Latino community – representative of an optimistic mentality that anyone can live their American Dream with enough hard work.

Today, I hear something I've never heard before – a desperation and frustration from families across Arizona that hard work feels like it's never going to cut it. Jobs today just feel more precarious and less fulfilling than ever.

My vision is for an economy that rebuilds the American middle class. Workers need higher wages, more career advancement opportunities, and more stability. Government should invest in growing the best-paying jobs, and those jobs should stay in America. Workplace technology should help workers be more productive and earn more, not automate their jobs away.

Anyone who works hard enough, saves enough, and plays by the rules should be able to build wealth for their family, buy a car and a house (or a big ass truck⁶), go on vacation – and even get rich.

HOW WE GOT HERE

Arizona's story offers insight into how the federal government let billionaires and giant corporations create our unbalanced economic system - and what we can do to fix it.

Electronics Manufacturing Offshoring

From the 1990s until the eve of the Great Recession, Arizona experienced unprecedented economic and population growth,⁷ but this growth masked the serious loss of high-paid, blue-collar jobs. Elite-backed trade policies - most notably China's accession to the World Trade Organization - incentivized multinational companies to ship computer and electronics manufacturing jobs overseas.⁸ Among the more than 35,000 Arizona manufacturing jobs certified by the Department of Labor (DOL) as lost to offshoring or imports in this era⁹ were those of our iconic Motorola factory in Mesa, Arizona, which closed in 2001.¹⁰

Low-Wage Job Boom

In the 2000s, Arizona experienced huge housing and population booms,¹¹ drawing many former manufacturing workers into construction.¹² More Arizonans found work in services - from administrative support to food service¹³ - but these jobs paid less than electronics manufacturing and were often designed as temporary jobs without quality benefits.¹⁴ Weak federal antitrust enforcement also facilitated corporate concentration, further depressing wages.¹⁵ Despite being one of the fastest job-producing states, Arizona's average wages were roughly \$2,500 below the national average¹⁶ - reflecting an abnormal situation marked by high job growth but low wage growth.¹⁷

Arizona's Great Recession Struggles

In 2007, the bottom fell out for Arizona's middle class. The Wall Street greed-induced financial crisis caused 297,000 jobs to evaporate, with nearly half of our state's construction workers losing work.¹⁸ Arizona was the second hardest hit state in the country, with the unemployment rate jumping to 11 percent¹⁹ and wage growth stagnating.²⁰ Not until a decade after the crash did employment reach pre-recession levels.²¹

Trump's Failure to Deliver for the Working Class

In the last decade, Arizona leaders and I led where the federal government had failed - raising the state's minimum wage in 2016²² and working to bring back

industries that elites had shipped abroad. I helped pass the **CHIPS and Science Act**²³ and fought the Albertsons-Kroger merger²⁴ – part of a brief national resurgence in deliberate industrial policy and antitrust enforcement.²⁵

But federal efforts barely scratch the surface in addressing decades of failure – **corporate profits have grown more than four times as fast as workers' pay as housing, energy, and food costs have skyrocketed since the pandemic.**²⁶ More than 40 percent of workers' wages fell between 2021 and 2024 after adjusting for inflation.²⁷ Like manufacturing jobs in the 1990s, giant corporations are now offshoring and automating blue-collar service, logistics, and transportation jobs – and workers and consumers are paying the price.²⁸

Over the past two years, the Trump Administration has reversed even our modest gains – killing the industrial policies that drove the biggest factory-construction boom in decades, launching illegal wars of choice, gutting worker protection agencies, and blessing corrupt corporate mergers.

Let's Get to Work

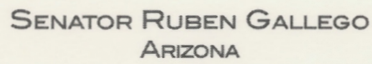
Our country has veered off course for too long – it's time for an urgent plan to recreate the middle class. I propose an agenda based on five pillars:

United States Senate

MEMORANDUM

1. RAISE WAGES AND IMPROVE BENEFITS.
2. CREATE AND PROTECT^{QUALITY} BLUE-COLLAR JOBS.
3. RESTORE WORKER TRUST IN GOVERNMENT IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI).
4. EXPAND JOB-CREATING ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FOCUSING OUTSIDE OF SUPERSTAR CITIES.
5. HELP WORKERS FIND JOBS FASTER.



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Failed Status Quo

Starting in the 1980s, a bipartisan elite consensus emerged that suppressed blue-collar workers' wages. If pay for typical workers had kept pace with productivity over the past five decades, their paychecks today would be more than 40 percent larger.²⁹

Despite this urgency, the federal government has routinely failed to change course. Republican administrations have been especially hostile to working-class Americans, starting with President Reagan's firing of striking air traffic controllers in 1981. But many Democratic elites have also failed to meet the moment, notably blocking a minimum wage increase in 2021.³⁰

Today, the average Arizonan needs to earn \$24.47 per hour to meet basic needs.³¹ To be considered middle class in Arizona, a household must earn at least \$54,324 per year³² but the typical annual salary for many blue-collar workers is significantly lower, with typical healthcare support, food preparation, and building cleaning and maintenance workers only earning between \$38,000 and \$41,000 per year.³³ Our state's minimum wage sits at \$15.15 per hour – far better than the abysmal federal \$7.25 minimum wage, but still not enough for families to meet their needs.

In the past, a worker could start in the mailroom or as a janitor and work their way up to management. Today, workers in Arizona's most common service jobs get stuck, not for lack of grit or skill, but because companies have no incentive for them to grow. Many don't even work for the company whose offices they clean or fix; they work for a separate contractor. The statistics are stark: every four years, a low-wage worker's odds of moving to a higher-paying job shrink by half.³⁴

Affordability Benefits of Worker Organizing

Union density in Arizona has fallen by half since the 1980s³⁵ – and paychecks have paid the price. Increasing union membership would make workers' lives immensely more affordable.

CASE STUDY: THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIONS IN ADDRESSING AFFORDABILITY
Phoenix and Tempe Union Hotels Contract Wins

	6.1.23	TODAY	1.1.28
\$8/HR ACROSS-THE-BOARD WAGE INCREASE			
Housekeeper Wage	\$16.40/hr	\$22.50/hr	\$25/hr
Pension	NONE	YES	YES
Legal Services	NONE	YES	YES
Healthcare	75 Percent Employer Covered	75 Percent Employer Covered	95 Percent Employer Covered

Raised full time annual wages for housekeepers from \$34,112 to \$52,000.
Source³⁸

If Arizona repealed its anti-worker, right-to-work statute and ensured public sector collective bargaining rights, typical yearly wages would increase by \$3,600.³⁶ If union density increased to 30 percent, the typical Arizona worker would make \$9,700 more per year.³⁷

Trump Administration's Anti-Worker Policies

President's Trump's pro-worker rhetoric has turned out to be a complete farse, with his Administration nearly always supporting elites over the working class. For the first time since the pandemic, wage growth is lower than inflation.³⁸ To add fuel to the fire, the Trump Administration has aggressively attempted to undermine worker organizing by kneecapping the agency responsible for overseeing union elections, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).⁴⁰ NLRB Region 28, which includes Arizona, would need to nearly double its current agent count to be considered appropriately staffed by the agency's own measurement.⁴¹ The repercussions are serious for workers: it now takes roughly two years for the agency to close an unfair labor practice charge case in Arizona.⁴¹ As workers know, big businesses take advantage of this delay to bust unions – spending over \$1.5 billion on anti-union campaigns last year alone.⁴³

It's Time to Support Workers

In 1983, corporate strike-busting at the copper mines in Clifton and Morenci, Arizona, set off decades of union busting across the country.⁴⁴ Today, despite this hostile climate, Arizona workers are leading the nation in organizing for better wages, benefits, and working conditions. I was proud to join striking Starbucks workers at a picket line in Gilbert, Arizona,⁴⁵ call out union busting at Wells Fargo,⁴⁶ and successfully support Navajo workers in closing a pay disparity at Frontier Communications.⁴⁷

As elected officials, it's our job to be just as courageous as the men and women organizing for a better future. To help workers live the American Dream, we must:

1. **Raise the minimum wage to \$20 per hour.** Raise the minimum wage to \$20 per hour over three years and eliminate subminimum wages. Index the minimum wage to two thirds of the median wage, a level proven to support workers and reduce turnover without impacting employment.⁴⁸ Reject the Trump Administration effort to exclude home care workers from longstanding minimum wage protections. Raising the minimum wage to \$20 per hour by 2030 would help one in four workers in Arizona, raising annual wages by an average of \$2,400.⁴⁹
2. **Triple union density by 2035.** Design and execute policies by working backwards to meet the commonsense goal of tripling union density. Reforms should include requiring timely first contract formation after workers unionize, automatically certifying a union if over 50 percent of workers have signed authorization cards, banning companies from holding captive audience meetings, granting all workers collective bargaining rights, and expanding career pathways into union work.

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3. **Raise wages and improve benefits at a sector level.** Promote sectoral bargaining – collective bargaining between workers and firms that creates minimum standards for all workers in an industry or occupation.⁵⁰ In many industries, firm-level unionization is nearly impossible because of employer union-busting efforts. Sectoral bargaining – whether through tripartite industry standards boards made up of employer, worker, and government representatives, or through direct negotiations between industry-wide employer and worker representatives – offers a pathway to set wage and benefit floors and increase labor standards so companies may then compete over product quality rather than low wages.
 4. **Require companies to pay double for overtime work, not time and a half.** Raise federal overtime pay to double a worker's wage for every hour worked over 40 hours a week, instead of the current rate of time and a half. Peg the overtime salary threshold to the income of the 55th percentile of full-time salaried workers.
 5. **Ensure companies offer employees quality benefits.** Require all companies to offer employees paid sick leave, paid vacation leave, and paid family and medical leave.
 6. **Reward holiday work.** Require companies to pay employees at overtime rates for work performed on federal holidays.
 7. **Ban surveillance wage setting.** Prevent companies from using workers' personal data to set individualized wages.
 8. **Create a Worker Empowerment Corps.** Create and fund a network to provide workers with “know your rights” resources and information on unions and collective bargaining. Build on DOL's Worker Organizing Resource and Knowledge (WORK) Center initiative. Model the effort on the Small Business Administration (SBA)-funded SCORE Program, which supports a national network of volunteer mentors providing free business mentoring, education, and resources to entrepreneurs.
 9. **Create an Office of Worker Advocacy.** Create an office at DOL modeled after the SBA's Office of Advocacy to gather worker input and advocate for workers as agencies develop regulations.
 10. **Push companies to offer quality wages or make them pay up.** Place an excise tax on large companies' gross receipts if they consistently pay employees low wages.

11. **Restore competition to the labor market.** Prohibit companies from using non-competes, no-poach agreements, and Training Repayment Agreement Provisions. Concentrated labor markets – where a few large employers dominate hiring in an industry or region – depress typical worker wages by over \$10,000.⁵¹
12. **Crack down on worker misclassification.** End ability of employers to misclassify employees as “independent contractors” to skirt minimum wage, overtime, unemployment insurance, and workers’ compensation responsibilities. On a per-worker basis, Arizona janitors, cleaners, and construction workers lose between \$8,000 and \$15,000 per year because of misclassification.⁵²
13. **Stand with workers.** Support constituents during organizing drives, strikes, and work stoppages – including joining workers on picket lines. The National Labor Relations Act stipulates that the policy of the United States is to encourage collective bargaining by protecting workers’ full freedom of association.⁵³
14. **Restructure workforce protection agencies to meet today’s challenges.** Modernize and properly staff worker protection agencies. For example, enforcing future warehouse work quota and paid sick time regulation enforcement would require additional expertise at DOL. Explore reforms to restructure independent agencies like the NLRB to ensure enforcement goals.
15. **Improve workers’ rights enforcement.** Create whole-of-government labor enforcement collaborations, building on Federal Trade Commission (FTC), NLRB, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Department of Justice, and DOL partnerships.⁵⁴ Explore integrations of AI in workers’ rights enforcement. While AI cannot effectively replace inspectors, it can be used to augment capacities, identify repeat offenders, and analyze data.
16. **Allow workers to effectively hold companies accountable for violations.** Increase maximum penalties, create civil monetary penalties, and add private rights of action for willful violations of labor laws. Eliminate forced arbitration clauses in employment contracts.
17. **Reward work through the tax code.** Raise the top capital gains tax rate to equalize the tax burden between income and capital gains.
18. **Reform the tax code to support workers.** End business tax deductions for union-busting expenditures. Allow workers to deduct the full cost of their union dues from their income taxes, regardless of whether they choose to take the standard deduction or to itemize. End striking workers’ double taxation on payments they receive from strike funds.



SENATOR RUBEN GALLEGO
ARIZONA

PILLAR # 2:
Create and Protect
Quality Blue-Collar
Jobs



Offshoring, Automation, and Consolidation

Since the 1980s, elites have built an economic structure that rewards short-term thinking and blue-collar worker paycheck extraction. The government let companies pursue excessive stock buybacks and offshore production, with the tax code and markets rewarding firms that designed technology domestically but manufactured it abroad. Rather than fighting to protect American jobs, the federal government failed to address the Chinese government's unfair subsidies, currency manipulation, and wage and consumption suppression that boosted the country's output levels to 30 percent of global manufacturing. And, rather than foster competition, Washington allowed 75 percent of industries to become more concentrated over the last two decades.⁵⁵

Without competition or domestic production, companies lost the muscle memory to beneficially innovate for typical American families. The United States now lags China in most critical technologies.⁵⁶ Too often, our innovation has merely fueled exploitative industries like speculative financial instruments and "surveillance pricing consultants" who use AI to find consumers' pain points and raise prices. These so-called innovations only squeeze out funding to expand the productive economy.

Elite politicians and corporate leaders have continuously claimed that industrial policy and antitrust reform hurt efficiency by "picking winners and losers." But the status quo already picks winners and losers – the elite wins, the working class loses.

President Trump's Blue Collar Bust

Thanks to state efforts and a brief window of smart federal industrial policy like the CHIPS and Science Act, Arizona is bringing back chip manufacturing. But the broad manufacturing renaissance this Administration promised hasn't materialized.

The reason is infuriating: President Trump has neither the interest nor the attention span to do the hard work of managing a coherent industrial policy strategy. He conducts economic policy to favor large corporate CEOs who have kissed his ring, settle personal grievances, and strike personally-enriching deals – and he sometimes just spews unproductive lies for no evident reason.⁵⁷ It's tempting to believe President Trump's approach will soon create abundant jobs when he claims his tariff threats have yielded \$20 trillion in United States investment commitments. But that figure is brazenly fabricated,⁵⁸ only invented to make headlines, generate clicks, and produce good television.

Rather than address China's trade-cheating practices undercutting American workers, the President has made numerous concessions to autocratic Chinese leader

Xi Jinping while imposing high tariffs on countries with which we have balanced trade in attempts to settle feuds.⁵⁹ Another 74,000 American manufacturing workers have lost their jobs since President Trump returned to office and actual investment in new American factories has plummeted 30 percent.⁶⁰ Mass layoffs in Arizona are accelerating,⁶¹ and \$2 billion in green energy capital investment in Arizona has been canceled or stalled thanks to the 2025 Republican tax law.⁶²

Equally alarming, the service and logistics sectors are now experiencing waves of job losses similar to how bad trade policy devastated American manufacturing. In just the last four years, the Phoenix metro area has lost 26 percent of its customer service jobs, with jobs offshored or automated to the detriment of customers.⁶³ The Trump Administration has also blessed numerous job-killing mergers.⁶⁴

Beyond the Five C's

We need a new economic bargain: we must grow productive industries that serve Americans – not exploitative industries that funnel money from the working class to shareholders.

Historically, Arizona's economy was driven by its "5 Cs" – copper, cattle, cotton, citrus, and climate.⁶⁵ We need to get back to those basics and deliberately chart a path forward. I propose adding five additional Cs: chips, canyons, customer service, connection, and competition. Taken together, these Cs represent a vision to create blue-collar worker prosperity and to serve other productive purposes – whether that be strengthening supply chain resilience, enriching culture, promoting human connection, helping consumers, or safeguarding national security.

THE NEXT 5 C'S

1. Chips
2. Canyons
3. Customer Service
4. Connection
5. Competition

- **CHIPS** – Bring advanced manufacturing supply chains back to the United States, starting with semiconductors but also including batteries, microelectronics, magnets, critical minerals, printed circuit boards, active pharmaceutical ingredients and medicines, shipbuilding, and aerospace systems.
- **CANYONS** – Double down on showcasing Arizona’s wonders and culture through tourism and entertainment.
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE** – Maintain Arizona as a hub for customer service work. Giant corporations see call center work as ripe for offshoring and automation. This vision is deeply misguided. American consumers are fed up with unhelpful chatbots⁶⁶ and desire human connection.
- **CONNECTION** – Arizona’s border communities are the beating heart of America’s logistics industry. Place Arizona at the center of efforts to create a high-wage North American trading block to counter nonmarket economies like China.
- **COMPETITION** – Restore effective antitrust policy. When firms compete, they pioneer new discoveries and grow the economy.

These new and old Arizona Cs are a template for growth – both for Arizona and the United States. To create and grow blue collar jobs in America, we must:

1. **Supercharge industrial policy for advanced manufacturing.** Grow the supply chains critical to economic resiliency and national security by setting measurable milestone goals – like ensuring an increasing global share of advanced technologies are produced domestically each year.
 - a. **Utilize complete industrial policy toolbox.** Industrial policy isn’t just tax credits, and it’s certainly not broad, ever-changing tariffs or reckless trade wars with allies. Consider tactics including demand, investment, research, and production incentives; assistance for industrial site preparedness; offtake agreements; a national workforce credentialing strategy; public-private partnerships to address industry-wide bottlenecks; antitrust enforcement; and targeted trade policies and partnerships. Ensure tactics maximize public benefit – not just corporate bottom lines.
 - b. **Reform government.** Create an Industrial Policy Council in the Executive Office of the President similar to the National Security Council to coordinate across the federal government. Staff the council with career experts, enabled by streamlining federal hiring. In the past, agencies like the Department of Commerce and USTR let corporations overly dictate policy. Ensure the new council focuses all government efforts on worker-first, community-first growth.

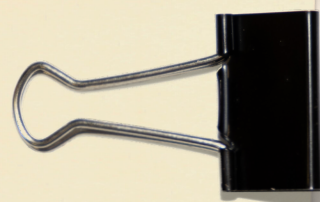
- c. **Sustain long-term community buy-in.** Condition industrial policy support on requirements around short construction timelines, local hiring, union neutrality, apprenticeships, wages and benefits, stock buybacks, consumer benefits, and water use. Include clawbacks for noncompliance, production offshoring, missed milestones, or early closure.
 - d. **Reimagine government lending programs.** Codify and massively expand the Export Import Bank's Make More in America Initiative. Direct the SBA to work with financial institutions to provide low-interest loans for machinery equipment for small and medium manufacturers.
2. **Invest in innovative manufacturing techniques.** Reverse Trump Administration's efforts to defund the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). Create additional grants to support additive manufacturing (3D printing) integration and expansion. Additive manufacturing is uniquely suited for domestic expansion, allowing customers to quickly order custom products.⁶⁷
 3. **Grow the American customer service industry.** Allow customers to immediately transfer to a United States-based, human customer-service agent at request. Require call centers handling sensitive consumer data to be located in the United States.
 4. **Grow the entertainment and tourism industries.** Eliminate the reckless Trump Administration visa policies reducing international tourism. Create an office of agrotourism at the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to support rural tourism. Protect entertainment workers by reversing and preventing industry consolidation.
 5. **Promote onshoring and domestic investment through the tax code.** Require multinational corporations to pay the same tax rate on profits earned abroad as they do on those earned in the United States. Eliminate tax deductions for the costs of offshoring. Increase the tax on stock buybacks.
 6. **Increase competition.** Discourage monopolization and mergers through the tax code. Ban megamergers for companies with market capitalizations over \$100 billion and increase antitrust violation penalties. End the ability of giant corporations to evade taxation during mergers. Expand antitrust statutes to scrutinize serial small merger rollups.
 7. **Rein in unchecked private equity practices.** Close the carried interest loophole. Hold private equity companies liable for debts incurred during the period the private equity firm was in control of the portfolio company, including wages, severance pay, health benefits, and employee pension obligations. The average private equity-acquired company has a 13 percent headcount reduction two years after a buyout.⁶⁸

8. **Create a trade policy for the working class.** Replace both the past failed corporation-first trade model and President Trump's corrupt, vendetta-driven approach. Repeal President Trump's reckless, across-the-board global tariffs, and end the preposterous trade war with Canada. Instead, pursue a strategic trade policy targeting unfair practices by chronic-surplus countries like China. Set and stick to clear and adequate phase-in schedules and rates to create predictability if imposing strategic trade restrictions. Combine trade and other industrial policies to effectively grow domestic industry.
9. **Counter trade-cheating countries.** Update trade remedy law to effectively enforce and penalize dumping and other trade abuses. Impose duties on goods unfairly subsidized using environmentally damaging processes. Strongly enforce the ban on imports of goods made with forced labor. Work with allies to address China's trade cheating over the long term, including establishing preferential trading arrangements among countries that agree to maintain balanced trade and enforce labor, environmental and competition standards.
10. **Create high-wage North American trading block.** Negotiate higher labor and environmental standards as part of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) review and improve company-specific enforcement of labor and environmental standards. Create manufacturing minimum wage for all workers in the USMCA block. Strengthen rules of origin and negotiate common border measures for key goods to prevent nonmarket economies from gaining backdoor access to our market. Remove rules that block domestic anti-monopoly, right-to-repair, AI safety, and data privacy and security policy enforcement.
11. **Create high-wage sectoral trade agreements for critical supply chains.** Derisk supply chains from China by forming trade agreements among market-based economies that agree to meet environmental and labor standards and play by fair trade rules. Set Made in America production requirements as part of the agreements to ensure minimum domestic production.
12. **Treat international labor standards seriously.** Require countries to commit to strong labor standards and enforcement before entering a trade pact, not as a future promise. Ensure labor violations carry meaningful penalties such as preventing importation of a company's goods.
13. **Return sanity to the federal budget to spur private sector investment.** Reduce the federal primary deficit and stabilize the debt to GDP ratio by reversing favorable tax treatment for millionaires, billionaires, corporations, and large pass-through businesses. Without the Bush and Trump tax cuts that overwhelmingly benefited the wealthy, the debt to GDP ratio would be falling.⁶⁹
14. **Invest in land ports of entry.** Add a USMCA annex focused on reducing perishable good inspection delays, expanding cold-storage port capacity, and accelerating food safety inspections. Accelerate federal investments to modernize land ports of entry.



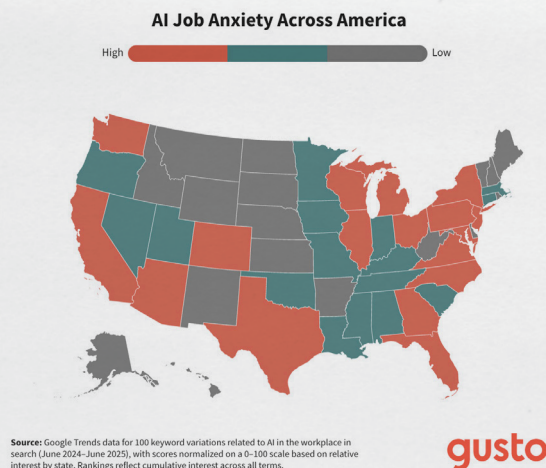
SENATOR RUBEN GALLEGOS
ARIZONA

PILLAR #3:
Restore Worker Trust in
Government in the Age
of Artificial Intelligence
(AI)



After decades of failed economic policies, government has lost workers' trust. First and foremost, we must slow AI development and regulate it. Under no circumstances

should we allow advanced AI products to pose a risk to human health and safety.



Regarding jobs, today, Arizona is one of the top states for AI anxiety.⁷¹ Already, 68 percent of workers report being tracked by technology.⁷² Workers often have little influence or visibility into what data employers collect about them, how companies use that information, or how automated

systems influence decisions about their jobs. Meanwhile, entry-level Arizonans – in customer service, coding, and information technology (IT) – are struggling to get hired. And Arizonans who lived through the Great Recession are watching the economy make an enormous bet on AI, and asking: what happens to us if it doesn't pay off?

AI could be positive – boosting worker skills, productivity, and wages, and creating new breakthroughs (and jobs) in fields like semiconductor, medicine, and aerospace production. Demand for advanced AI Nvidia Blackwell chips is already powering high-tech manufacturing growth in Arizona, and the technology could help spark a new industrial revolution.⁷³ But the technology could also enable more worker surveillance, wage depression, and mass job displacement – or simply fail to deliver the promised productivity gains, triggering stock losses, layoffs, and business closures.

In this moment, one thing is certain: we must earn back workers' trust. The most important question today isn't whether to accelerate or pause technological progress – it's whether workers or elites are in the driver's seat. Unfortunately, without reform, Americans know the answer: over eight times as many Americans say AI will benefit business owners and executives than workers.⁷⁴

To ensure workers have a voice in how AI changes their jobs and a fair share of the prosperity it creates, we must:

1. **Establish a New Deal-style public service jobs program.** Create a program that funds jobs that allow AI-displaced workers to help families and serve communities. Explore a funding structure including a data center tax, a token tax, and/or an excise tax on large AI company revenue. Enable nonprofits, community associations, and small local and tribal governments to seek

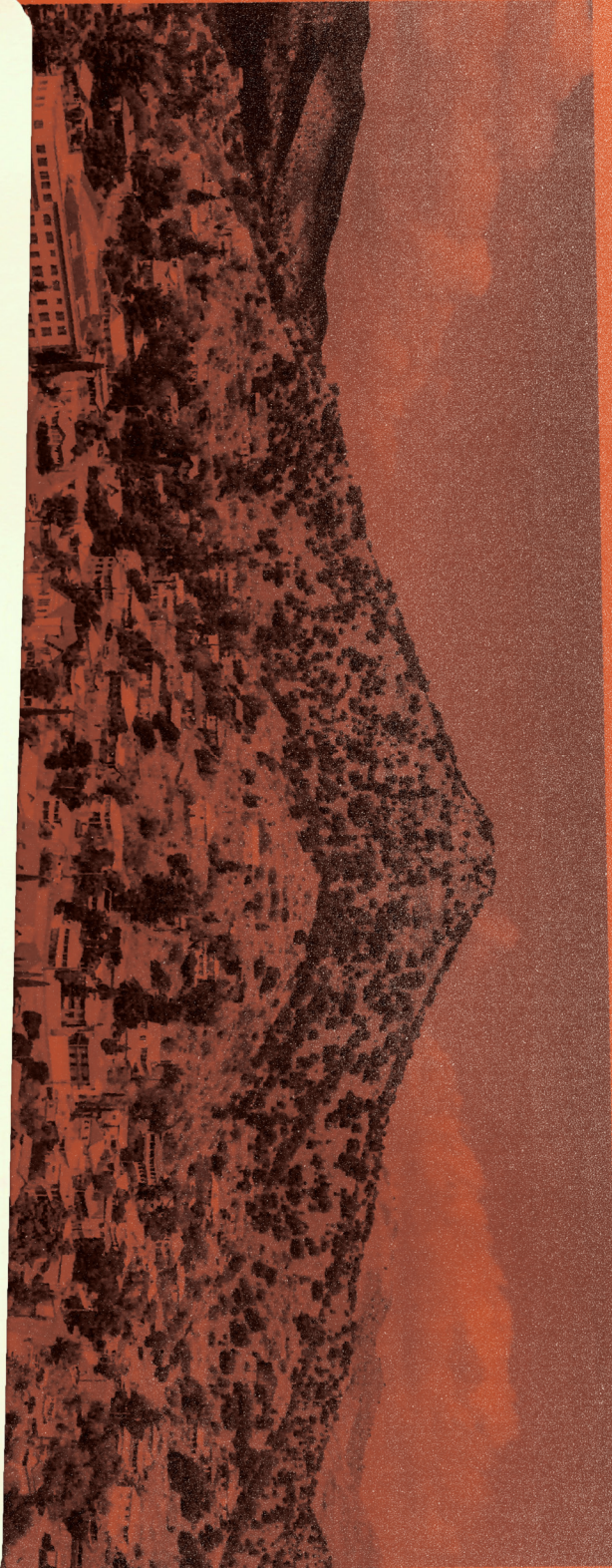
funding for these positions. Funded roles should promote human connection and community cohesion. These jobs could include coaching little league, counseling people with addiction, beautifying neighborhoods, improving infrastructure, and caring for young children, aging seniors, and sick or disabled individuals.

2. **Allow individuals to charge companies for using their personal data.** Allow individuals to set a price that companies must pay them for the use of their data.
3. **Promote work over automation.** Create a corporate “robot” tax to discourage job dislocation and maintain company payroll contributions for automated-away jobs. Use tax revenue to support displaced workers. Labor is currently taxed at a higher rate than automation. Employment would have been 4 percent higher in the 2010s if labor and capital taxes were more equal.⁷⁶
4. **Require employers and workers to bargain over workplace technology.** Create a process for workers to elect representatives to bargain with industry, ideally by sector, over decisions involving workplace technology and data privacy where workers have not already chosen a union to bargain on their behalf. Ensure unions and companies negotiate over workplace technology and data privacy standards.
5. **Protect workers from highly disruptive automation.** Place safety and workforce conditions on industries seeking to deploy technologies that would directly displace a huge number of workers. Consider conditions including prohibitions on complete automation, human operator requirements, no net job and wage loss, displaced worker priority hiring, contributions to training funds, union apprenticeship creation, hard caps on technology deployment, and/or Buy American requirements.
6. **Modernize and expand the unemployment insurance system.** Require states to offer at least six months of benefits, replace 75 percent of workers’ wages, and cover part-time workers, self-employed workers, and new entrants to the labor force. Fund additional benefits partially by taxing data centers, AI tokens, or AI company revenue.
7. **Set minimum standards for workplace decisions made using technology.** Prohibit employers from relying exclusively on AI, algorithmic management, or automated systems to make important work-related decisions such as hiring, discharge, or discipline. Require meaningful human review for these workplace decisions.
8. **Protect workers from harmful data collection.** Establish minimum protections against company collection or use of worker data unrelated to specific, legitimate business purposes.



SENATOR RUBEN GALLEGOS
ARIZONA

PILLAR # 4:
Expand Job-Creating
Entrepreneurship, Focusing
Outside of Superstar
Cities



Over the last few decades, large ‘superstar’ cities have experienced strong growth, while smaller cities, rural areas, and tribal communities have been left behind. In Arizona, this divide is clear. Since 2020, Maricopa County has accounted for two-thirds of the state’s growth.⁷⁶ Meanwhile, rural communities face shrinking populations, underfunded infrastructure, and diminished access to capital.

Small communities along the United States-Mexico border face distinct challenges. Cross border trade supports good-paying jobs in border communities, but there is less trade-related logistics industry than would be expected.⁷⁷ All too often, goods just pass through Arizona communities, leaving towns to absorb the costs of road maintenance, border disorder, and other infrastructure improvements. Many communities also contain “colonias,” which lack adequate sewage, water, and housing.

Development With Communities in the Drivers’ Seat

Communities know what they need to thrive – investments that create long-term, high-paying jobs. Unfortunately, the federal government has not done nearly enough to support smaller cities and towns.

One of the clearest examples of Congress’ failure to invest in positive “place-based” economic development is the inability to adequately fund Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs (Tech Hubs). Created as part of the CHIPS and Science Act, the program was meant to spur technology and advanced manufacturing growth outside of major cities. However, only 6 percent of the \$10 billion in authorized funding for the program has been invested.⁷⁸

On the other hand, the development that is occurring often overly benefits Big Tech executives rather than communities. AI data centers rarely shield consumers from energy price hikes, use enough American-made components to spur domestic manufacturing, or provide certainty to communities that they won’t skip town after a few years.

The federal government’s failure to help smaller communities address unreliable and antiquated transportation systems also negatively impacts rural economic activity. Today, the country’s four largest airlines control roughly three-quarters of domestic air travel.⁷⁹ Regional airlines are squeezed out of the market as the largest carriers concentrate investments and flight routes out of major hubs, making it difficult and costly for passengers to travel to smaller cities and rural areas.⁸⁰ Rural communities face additional strain from deteriorating transportation infrastructure. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law made historic investments, but decades of underinvestment mean the work of repairing rural roads and bridges is far from finished.

Growing Small Businesses

Small businesses are the backbone of Arizona's economy: over 700,000 small business employ over 1 million workers, particularly in rural communities.⁸¹ However, small businesses are struggling to stay afloat as they grapple with rising costs, everchanging tariff compliance, limited access to capital, and corporate consolidation.

On average, a small business owner spends \$40,000 in start-up costs.⁸² But for too many small business owners, securing financing is far harder than it is for large corporations, since small businesses lack the years in business or credit history banks often require before lending.⁸³

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Small businesses are struggling to stay afloat as they grapple with rising costs, everchanging tariff compliance, limited access to capital, and corporate consolidation.

Ranchers, independent grocers, restaurant owners, and farmers also face specific challenges from large corporations with concentrated power. Today, ranchers are squeezed by a concentrated meat processing market that only pays them 30 cents per retail beef dollar – a record low – despite retailers charging consumers record high prices.⁸⁴ Restaurant owners operating on the thinnest of margins fear new food supplier mergers will raise their input costs.⁸⁵ Giant corporations often use their leverage with suppliers to unfairly force mom-and-pop establishments to pay higher prices for identical supplies. And as President Trump pursues his elite-first trade policy, small businesses lack the resources of large corporations to ensure compliance, secure exemptions, and track ever-changing tariffs.

To grow Main Street communities, we must:

- 1. Make AI data centers work for communities, not the other way around.**

Impose a 10 percent excise tax on data center gross receipts to fund long-term community investments. End all tax deductions for data centers such as bonus depreciation. End the ability of data centers to deduct state and local taxes.

Require data centers to cover the full cost of needed generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades to the grid rather than shifting costs to families and businesses. Require data centers to bring additional energy to the grid, preventing energy cost increases for consumers and creating new production jobs – and require them to sustain energy investments even if they abandon the project. Prevent data centers from using key chips and components from China to spur domestic manufacturing. Push data centers to sign Project Labor Agreements and Community Benefits Agreements and use union labor to ensure high wages for both the construction and permanent workforces.

2. **Protect small businesses from corporate price discrimination.** Strengthen and modernize antitrust laws like the Robinson-Patman Act to stop giant corporations from forcing suppliers to charge small businesses more for their products.
3. **Prevent large corporations from blocking small business startups.** Prohibit restrictive land covenants used by large retailers to block grocery stores and pharmacies from opening in properties they once occupied.
4. **Support ranchers, farmers, small food processors, and restaurant owners.** Reduce immense corporate concentration in the meatpacking, food and restaurant supply, and grocery markets. Concentration squeezes and increases costs for small businesses. Provide SBA support to small businesses and farmer cooperatives to start food production businesses.
5. **Help small businesses get off the ground.** Increase the startup tax deduction from \$5,000 to \$50,000.
6. **Support job-creating “place-based” innovation.** Reauthorize and fully fund the Tech Hubs program, which was designed to create innovation consortium in smaller communities.
7. **Support border community development.** Direct the Department of Commerce to create an all-of-government economic strategy for border communities. Provide sufficient federal funding for border community infrastructure to account for wear-and-tear from cross border trade.

8. **Steer beneficial foreign direct investment (FDI) from market-based countries to rural communities.** Strengthen Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States reviews and create economic security review to spur beneficial investment and prevent American small businesses and workers from being unfairly undercut.
9. **Improve transportation networks in rural areas.** Stimulate visits, economic activity, and private investment by requiring airlines to reliably service rural communities and invest in infrastructure improvements. Help successful small public transportation systems grow.
10. **Invest in heavy-lift cargo drone technology to connect rural America.**
Establish a program to test and deploy drone technology that can be used to support decentralized production hubs in communities that are disconnected from major roadways.
11. **Protect and expand Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) lending.** Roll back the Trump administration's unlawful actions designed to shrink the CDFI Fund. CDFIs are a proven engine of economic growth in communities that lack access to traditional financing. Since 1994, Arizona has received \$3.2 billion in CDFI support, fueling investment in the neighborhoods that need it most.⁸⁶
12. **Modernize and properly enforce the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA).**
Roll back the ill-advised Trump administration changes that will reduce the number of banks required to make investments in communities that need capital. In one year alone, the CRA incentivized more than \$430 billion in private capital for small businesses and small farms, affordable housing, and community development.

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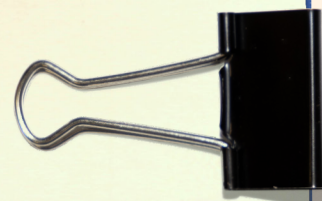
Queremos
salir adelante

Middle Class America
250 Freedom Road
United States



SENATOR RUBEN GALLEGOS
ARIZONA

PILLAR #5:
Help Workers Find
Jobs Faster



Today's job search process has become a nightmare, especially for recent graduates, young workers, and those hoping to re-enter the labor force. The average job search now stretches close to six months, and the median unemployed worker searches for over 10 weeks before finding a job.⁸⁷ For recent college graduates, the outlook is even bleaker. Unemployment for workers aged 22 to 27 has climbed to roughly 5.6 percent, well above the 4.2 percent rate for workers overall. Entry-level opportunities have dropped by over 73 percent in recent years.⁸⁸

Workers often spend hours applying to jobs that were never real, are screened out by software instead of hiring managers, and are forced to navigate an overcomplicated path for employment. This wastes workers' valuable time and energy, eroding their hope that they will be able to land an opportunity and provide for themselves and their families.

To drastically improve the job search process, we must:

1. **Crack down on fake job postings known as "ghost jobs."** Prohibit companies from posting job advertisements they have no intention of filling. Require postings that are intended to be resume banks or that use AI to clearly disclose that information.
2. **Give laid-off workers more time to find a new job.** Require companies to provide affected workers with 120-day notice in the event of a mass layoff or closure. Currently, the federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act only requires companies to give employees 60-day notice. Close loopholes allowing companies to evade the requirement.
3. **Facilitate the creation and expansion of joint labor-management training programs.** Provide grants and tax credits to support the creation of training programs, including registered apprenticeships, where labor unions partner with companies to train and upskill workers. These programs directly place workers in good-paying, union careers without an arduous job search.

CLOSING REMARKS

There's an immense pride that comes from working hard, bringing money home, and providing security for a family. I know that feeling well – as do millions of working-class Americans.

For far too long, we've had a broken economy where hard work just isn't nearly enough. The federal government let giant corporations, billionaires, and elites write the rules, and we're living with the results: costs have soared, wages have stalled, and jobs have left. This bipartisan, failed status quo must end.

Working-class Americans aren't asking for handouts. They don't resent anyone else's success – they just want a fair system. Work hard enough, and you should be able to get ahead, provide for your kids, take a vacation, and even get rich.

Our job is to decide who our economy should be for. To me, the choice is clear. Our economy must be for the middle class, not the elites.

¡Adelante!

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