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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROP 301 Opposing View

Cave Creek, AZ (May 11, 2017) -- Frank Riggs, Republican candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction, calls Diane Douglas' proposal for a permanent \$400 million per year increase in the Prop 301 sales tax **"the wrong message by the wrong messenger."** He went on to say, "Mrs. Douglas' tenure has been characterized by incompetency, mismanagement and lawsuits and now she wants to raise our sales taxes by \$400 million every year in perpetuity."

"If Mrs. Douglas is so concerned about funding for our K-12 schools, why has the Arizona Department of Education, which she oversees, spent over \$4 million for travel costs and legal fees in her short 2 1/2 years in office (*Arizona Daily Independent*: "Douglas Pushes False Narrative To Get Additional Funding," April 10, 2017)? Those are taxpayer funds that should have gone towards classroom teaching and learning instead. Now she's embarking on another of her 'We Are Listening' tours and using even more taxpayer funding to travel the state to promote her permanent sales tax increase."

Riggs supports the extension of the current Prop. 301 0.6-cent sales tax only on the condition the funds raised are used to increase teacher compensation and dollars to the classroom. He said, "I understand that compensation is important to recruiting and retaining the very best teachers for Arizona's kids. We must give our teachers the respect they deserve and the autonomy they crave." According to the State Auditor General, only 53.5 cents of every education dollar went to the classroom in 2015, the lowest level of classroom spending in the 16 years the state has been keeping track.

"Mrs. Douglas' proposal is an obvious publicity ploy to bolster her reelection prospects. She floated a similar proposal in 2015 and it went nowhere. Her latest gambit has no chance of winning support from the governor, state legislature or general public. More than listening, this has turned into the 'in one ear and out the other' tour. What real accomplishments can she point to that prove she deserves another term?"

By contrast, Riggs is a former public school district president and charter school president. As a three-term U.S. Congressman, he chaired the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, authored legislation on charter schools, special education and vocational-technical education, and was named "National Head Start Legislator of the Year." The Heritage Foundation said, "Representative Riggs spearheaded many cutting-edge initiatives like school choice and charter schools."

After leaving Congress, he became the founding CEO of an award-winning, education nonprofit and Community Development Financial Institution providing growth capital and facilities financing to charter schools in Arizona and nationwide. He is also an Army veteran, former police officer and successful small business owner.

Riggs' leadership record in the private, public, governmental and nonprofit sectors, and his expertise in education from local school board to Congress, make him the right choice for parents, teachers and students.

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