

NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Arizona Retailers Recognize Lesko's Tax Reform Efforts

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Nov. 12, 2013) – Rep. Debbie Lesko won the Legislator of the Year award from the Arizona Retailers Association last Thursday, Nov. 7, 2013. ARA chose Lesko because of her support for legislation that simplified the sales tax system for Arizona businesses, said Michelle Allen Ahlmer, Executive Director for ARA.

Retailers were especially happy with the simplifications because they have had to operate under a complicated sales tax system for decades, Lesko said.

"The sales tax reform package that Ms. Lesko sponsored and championed was a necessary benefit for all businesses," said ARA President Steve Helm. "But retailers in particular have been burdened with a cumbersome process that will be streamlined as a result of her efforts."

The improvements will also help to reduce taxes for consumers who contract with a service provider like a plumber, Lesko said. "Under the new legislation, the service contractor will pay sales tax on the materials only, and you, the consumer, won't be charged a separate tax amount at all."

Lesko sponsored House Bill 2111, which was signed into law by Governor Jan Brewer earlier this year. The legislation dramatically improved the sales tax system, saving both time and money for Arizona businesses with regard to collecting and paying sales taxes as well as making it easier for business to comply with an audit from the Arizona Department of Revenue.

Arizona had one of the most complicated sales tax systems in the country, Lesko said, and this bill brings Arizona's sales tax system in line with what is used in 46 other states.

Lesko was also very pleased that her bill passed with support from both Democrats and Republicans. "I am absolutely elated that my tax reform legislation passed out of the legislature with bipartisan support and only one no vote!"

The legislation, among its main objectives, requires an online portal be set up by Jan. 1, 2015, data be consolidated so that the needs of all jurisdictions are met, and that a non-electronic means of capturing data also be made available.

This is the 10th year that ARA has given out the award, and the first time that Lesko has won it.

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