



# NEWS RELEASE

## Arizona House of Representatives

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Arizona House GOP Unites to Support Mesnard for Speaker, Allen for Majority Leader and Townsend for Majority Whip**

#### ***New Speaker to Appoint Michael Hunter House Chief of Staff***

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX (Wednesday, November 9, 2016)** - Having secured the support of Arizona voters across a clear majority of the State's 60 House seats for the 53<sup>rd</sup> Arizona Legislature, and in accordance with its traditions, newly-elected Arizona House Republicans met today at the Capitol's copper dome to nominate the next House Speaker and elect caucus leadership. By acclamation, the incoming House GOP caucus nominated Javan Daniel (J.D.) Mesnard for Arizona Speaker of the House, a 36-year-old Representative and Mesa Community College (MCC) faculty member. Also elected were Representative John Allen as House Majority Leader, and Representative Kelly Townsend as House Majority Whip.

"It's an honor and privilege, of course, to be selected by your peers for this critical role," said Speaker-Elect Mesnard. "Servant leadership is foundational to the birth of our nation, and will be key to sustaining and renewing it. The task ahead for our State isn't easy, and will require great sacrifice, creativity, and enthusiasm. The incoming Members of the House are not only up to the task, they intend to set a new standard for open, honest, and civil engagement on behalf of all citizens of Arizona."

A teacher for over 10 years at MCC, Mesnard has been an Arizona resident for over 25 years. Mesnard is a State Representative from Legislative District 17 (Chandler, Gilbert and Sun Lakes), having been elected to the Arizona House of Representatives on November 2, 2010. He has served on the Ways & Means, Elections, and Judiciary Committees and as Chair of the Commerce Committee. He was also the Speaker Pro Tempore of the Arizona House of Representatives from 2013-2014. Prior to running for office, J.D. spent 8 years working at the Arizona Senate where he served as a policy advisor on issues ranging from education, transportation and retirement, to family services and government administration. J.D. is a Summa Cum Laude graduate of Arizona State University with a Bachelor's degree in Music Composition. He also completed two Masters degrees, one in Business and the other in Public Administration—exemplifying his interest in both the public and private sectors. Born at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, FL (his father is a retired United States Air Force fighter pilot), J.D. spent many years as a music team leader, and as a youth counselor and mentor at his local church. Mesnard and his wife, Holly, a registered nurse at Chandler Regional Hospital, reside in Chandler.

Veteran Arizona lawmaker John Allen (R – 15) was elected Majority Leader of the Arizona House of Representatives. A native of Long Island, New York, Allen has resided in Arizona for 34 years. The new House Majority Leader-elect graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business. He and his wife, Tina, have three children and reside in Scottsdale.

Elected to the House of Representatives in 2012, Majority Whip Kelly Townsend (R – 16) is a U.S. Navy veteran, mother of three, widow of her husband Dan Townsend, and a specialist in the maternal child health field. She is finishing her Master's degree at ASU in Infant Family Practice. Representative Townsend is currently chairman of the Federalism and States' Rights Committee, and also sits on the Children and Family Affairs Committee, as well as the Government and Higher Education Committee. Whip-elect Townsend and her family reside in Mesa.

Incoming House Chief of Staff Michael Hunter is presently Vice President for State and Fiscal Affairs at Goldwater Institute. Leading the Institute's legislative efforts in Arizona, as well as policy development in public finance and taxation, Michael draws upon extensive experience in public policy and both the legislative and executive branches. Michael has served in the Arizona Governor's Office as chief lobbyist, policy director, and special advisor for tax policy and reform. He has also held senior staff positions in the Arizona State Senate, the Arizona Board of Regents and the Arizona Tax Research Association. Michael is a recognized expert in public finance, budget and taxation, and has served on numerous committees in state government, including the Arizona Fiscal Accountability Committee, the School Finance Advisory Committee, and the School District Redistricting Commission. Most recently he served on the Steering Committee for the Transportation and Trade Corridor Alliance, the Governor's Transaction Privilege Tax Simplification Task Force (which he chaired), and the Governor's Transition Budget Study Committee. Michael received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the California State University, Long Beach, and Master of Arts degree, also in Political Science, from the University of California, Riverside. He also served his country as an Officer in the Arizona Army National Guard. Michael resides in Phoenix with his wife, Dawn and two children. They are also active foster parents.

"The Arizona House will be extremely well served by the wisdom, experience, and reputation of Michael Hunter," said Speaker-elect Mesnard. "Michael is a known-quantity at the highest levels of Arizona policymaking, and is a highly competent and professional staff member with tremendous background in school finance, tax reform, budget, and countless other areas of expertise. His high character, and the respect he enjoys from both sides of the political aisle, will be a tremendous resource and asset for the Members of the House."

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