



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives  
Representative Matt Gress (R-4)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

---

Thursday, February 26, 2026  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## House Republicans Vote to Keep Kids in Class While Democrats Defend Walkouts and Shutdowns

*Rep. Matt Gress's HB 2313 protects classroom time after organized sick-outs shut down more than 20 Tucson campuses*

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – The Arizona House of Representatives today passed [House Bill 2313](#), sponsored by House Education Committee Chairman Matt Gress, banning teacher strikes and organized work stoppages that shut down public schools. House Republicans voted to keep schools open. House Democrats voted against the bill.

The vote follows coordinated sick-outs in late January that closed approximately 20 Tucson Unified campuses after thousands of teachers and staff called out in connection with a political protest.

**“Closing more than 20 schools to make a political statement is unacceptable,”** Representative Gress said. **“This was not about pay or contracts. It was a coordinated work stoppage tied to a protest against federal immigration policy. Tens of thousands of students were sent home. Parents scrambled for childcare. That is not education. It is political activism paid for with students’ time.”**

HB 2313 prohibits teachers employed by school districts or charter schools from striking or participating in organized work stoppages. Teachers who engage in coordinated strikes forfeit civil service protections, reemployment rights, and employment-related benefits. The bill also reduces state funding when regular school days are moved to remote instruction because of organized work stoppages. Exceptions apply for approved instructional models, full-time online schools, and emergency situations.

**“Schools exist to teach reading, writing, math, and critical thinking,”** Representative Gress said. **“At a time when too many students are struggling in math and reading, the answer is not fewer days in the classroom or organized walkouts during school hours. It is not using students as leverage in political disputes.”**

**“When coordinated absences close campuses, students lose instructional time and taxpayers fund empty classrooms,”** Representative Gress added. **“If school employees want to protest, they can do it on their own time. In Arizona, classrooms come first.”**

HB 2313 now advances to the Senate for consideration.

*Matt Gress is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 4 in Phoenix and is Chairman of the House Committee on Education. Follow him on X at @MatthewGress.*

###