

# Arizona Girls State Independent



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## Happy “State” of Mind

BY SIANNA DAVIS  
Manzanita City Reporter

### The tale of two leaders

In the competitive environment of Girls State, many girls find themselves on edge with nervousness, anxiety, and excitement. In such a limited time, every girl that wishes to run must campaign and win people over with their thoughtful and passionate speeches. A job like this, is not for the weak and requires a lot of confidence and dedication.

During primary elections day, each girl spent hours campaigning and preparing to give their all. As our former Girls State Secretary revealed the names selected in the primary elections, two girls felt especially excited. Their names are Abigail and Michelle.

These two girls from Cholla city became friends in a matter of no time. They supported one another by campaigning together and spreading kindness to those who were around them.

After primary elections results, I got the chance to interview the two of them.



Abigail and Michelle smile in relief after primary elections. (Submitted)

Michelle, a candidate for governor, stated, “I feel a little more relaxed. Being selected in the primary elections gave me more confidence and encouragement to act as a leader”.

Abigail, a candidate for Secretary of State, shared, “I was nervous and scared at first, but after hearing my name, I just feel so thankful to everyone that even considered me”.

Little did these young ladies know, their dreams were not far from reach.

The following day, a roar of cheers filled the room as the Girls

State citizens clapped and cheered as Michelle and Abigail were sworn in as the official 2025 Girls State Governor and Secretary of State. The smiles on the two girls faces showcased the appreciation and gratitude towards the other members of the program.

The reveal of the election’s results stood as a remarkable moment neither of them will forget and a true testament of their hard work and passion.

### What’s next?

With the reveal of the elections, the citizens of Girls State are told to focus on their city and county books. Talk of the election results appears in conversations across the dorms and the excitement only grows.

Still, a lingering nervousness resides among the girls. As activities slow down and the sky dims, the results of Girls Nation remain on the horizon.



Abigail and Michelle smile as the new Girls State Governor and Secretary of State. (Submitted)



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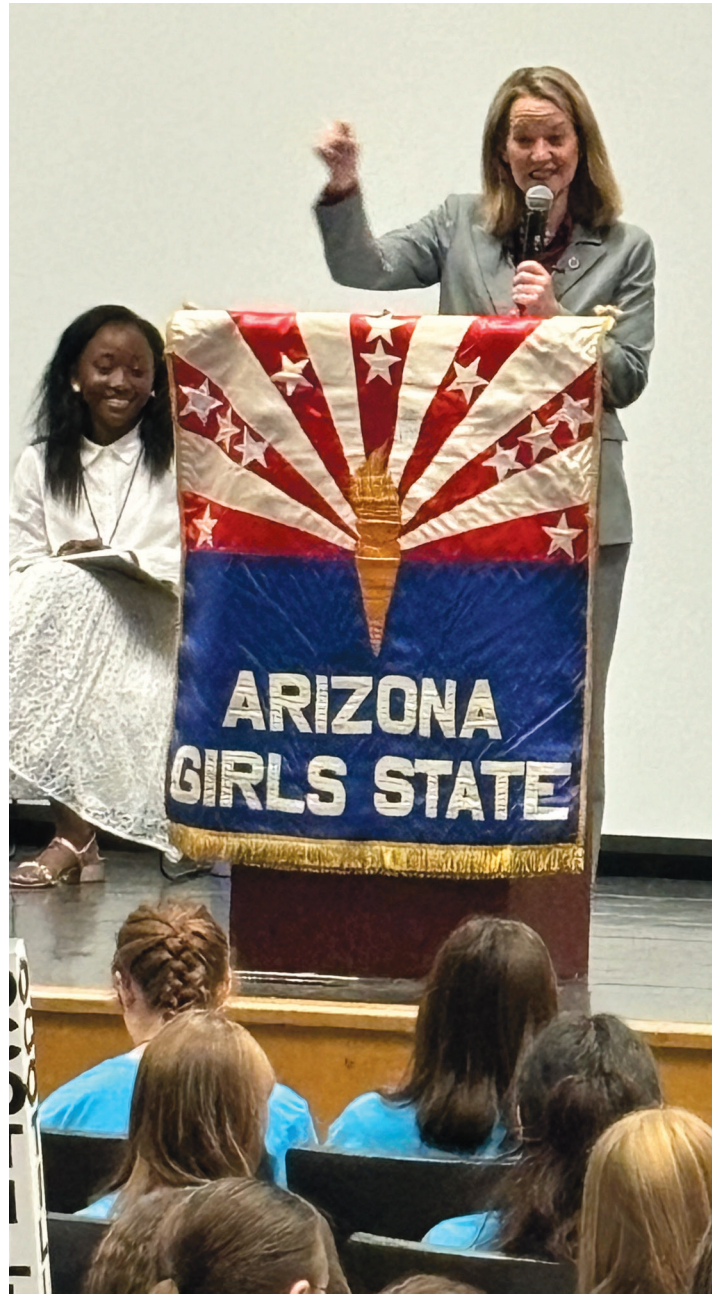
# Attorney General Mayes takes Girls State by storm

**BY HAARIKA RAAVI**  
 Ocotillo City Reporter

Amongst a contentious general election day, the citizens of Arizona Girls State were granted the opportunity to be in the presence of the Arizona Attorney General, Kris Mayes, who took her speech by storm as she explained her lifelong journey to becoming an elected official, the second woman Attorney General in our state. With passion and apparent genuineness, Attorney General Mayes approached the minds of so many young girls with the absolute ferocity that she holds for reproductive rights, elder affairs, and the current disputes over water for the people of Arizona. Afterwards, she took on much more interactive role as she took on questions from the reporters in the auditorium, many of which were surrounding the Attorney General Office’s plans for the duration of her term in office.

As Mayes began to discuss the topics that her office approaches most feverently, she did mention many specific cases and circumstances which she had encountered during her time in office, including that which has pushed her to continually fight for the reproductive rights, most prevalently *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* and the recent reappearance of the 1864 Arizona abortion ban, the latter of which was successfully repealed with H.B. 2677 only last month. Attorney General Mayes claimed with a proud stature that she would “never stop fighting for [our] reproductive rights.”

In accordance with her passion for our futures as young Arizonian women, a notable statement which she had repeated remained that we, as Girls’ State delegates, are the future of not only our cities and counties, but our state and great nation as well, whether we enter the field of government or any other career path. For that, she was determined to ingrain it in the minds of those present that as they approach the voting age, particularly in an election year as contentious as 2024, they should become registered voters. She emphasized the importance of voter registration, stating that from the urgency of lower-level county positions to the more contested federal ones, all be impacted by each individual vote, much like how her own election was won by about 280 votes.



Attorney General Mayes was heard telling delegates, who inquired following the allotted speaking time about when she is up for reelection, that her campaign to be reelected in 2026 will begin in 2025. In finality, the collective consensus seemed to be that the speaker’s presence has made a motivational impact upon the delegates of the 2024 Arizona Girls’ State session, with various reporters wholeheartedly thanking Kris Mayes for her having taken time out of her day to speak to this group.

# 'Being able to experience everything'

*Two interviews with Arizona Girls State Citizens on their perceptions of what being a reporter is like*

**BY ELEANOR ACKLEY**  
Ocotillo City Reporter

Over the past few days at Arizona Girls State, reporters from every city have interviewed, taken pictures, and written several articles. They have helped collect information to make the blog complete. So, I wanted to know how these reporters felt about the work they were doing. I interviewed Sianna Davis and Emilia Kim on June 6th, 2024. They discuss their experiences as a reporter and how reporting will impact their future.

**Hi, thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me. Please tell me your name, what city you live in, and what high school you go to.**

"So, my name is Emilia Kim. I...go to Basis Oro Valley in Oro Valley, Arizona."

**What Arizona Girls State City are you in?**

"I'm in Sycamore City."

**To start off, why did you choose to be a reporter at Arizona Girls State?**

"Yeah, I think there was a lot of different things...Mainly to branch out and meet new people, but I also have a lot of experience, I think, personally, writing...I've really enjoy writing ever since I was, like, maybe, 7-ish, so I run my school's newspaper. I've entered a couple of writing competitions and really enjoyed my time there."

**Have you enjoyed your experience as a reporter so far?**

"Yeah, I've loved it! I've met so many new people, gotten to ask amazing questions to various, different people here at Girls State...It's been a great experience, for sure."

**What is your favorite task to do as a reporter?**

"...Definitely talking to people...I love

to yapp, I love to just talk about current world affairs...I was given a...New York Times subscription for my birthday and, so, I've taken a lot of inspiration from some of my favorite reporters that work at the New York Times...Just being able to connect with people."

**What is your least favorite task to do as a reporter?**

"...I don't know if I necessarily have a least favorite. I think...there are up sides and down sides to talking to people a lot. I've run into conflicts...about political ideology, run into conflicts about communication...So, there are definitely tensions, but being over to overcome them is a big part of being a reporter."

**For the past few days, you have written several articles. Which one of your articles is your favorite? Why?**

"My favorite article...Definitely, I wrote one article about the Nationalist Party and the rally that we did on...Tuesday. So, the Tuesday rally was definitely one of my favorites. I got to talk to a bunch of different people. We had just an amazing time. It was definitely hectic, definitely crazy, but there was so much excitement and energy, especially since it was so early on in the week."

**Are you going to use the skills you gained as a reporter in Arizona Girls State in your real life or career?**

"Yes! Definitely...Specifically, I learned a lot about communication, I learned a lot about tensions, about political tensions, especially. I come from a really small school where a lot of us hold the same political ideologies and coming to Girls State has definitely broadened...the experiences and stories that I...A lot of people have shared very specific stories and experiences that I've never had before, never heard of before."

Hi, thank you so much for agreeing to speak with me. Please tell me your name, what city you live in, and what high school you go to.

"I'm Sianna and I'm from Glendale and I go to Ironwood High School."

**What Arizona Girls State City are you in?**

"Manzanita City."

**To start off, why did you choose to be a reporter at Arizona Girls State?**

"I really like the idea of being able to write blogs and different articles. I'm a huge writer, so it's very fun to get to write about what's happening at Girls State."

**Have you enjoyed your experience as a reporter so far?**

"Absolutely! I love it. I love seeing...my articles on the Girls State page."

**What is your favorite task to do as a reporter?**

"I think my favorite task is probably getting pictures to put on the articles. It's very fun to try to get the right angles and get really good pictures."

**What is your least favorite task to do as a reporter?**

"Probably coming up with questions to ask for the Whistlestop..."

**For the past few days, you have written several articles. Which one of your articles is your favorite? Why?**

"Ooh, that's a hard one. I think my favorite might have to be the first one I ever wrote because it was my first time being able to experience everything and seeing how to really write an article for, like, a huge company, I guess, like this."

**Are you going to use the skills you gained as a reporter in Arizona Girls State in your real life or career?**

"...yeah!...Most definitely. I think it's going to help me a lot...if I do journalism in high school or in college."

**Please remember to stay hydrated and drink lots of water!**



# Leadership in Cholla City

BY MYA VILLALBA  
Cholla City Reporter

Once again, all the girls from Cholla city proved themselves and their capabilities. Not only did the city work together but they also took time and effort to encourage the other girls from other cities. Without them having those leadership and interpersonal skills, not as many girls might not have placed in County, State, and Nation. However, there was a “Cholla City Takeover” where many of our very own girls were elected to their desired positions.

These two girls had enough ambition and charisma to secure the positions that they wanted from the second they walked into these doors. They had put in the work and

dedication and it had paid off.

Having leadership is critical in the world and here at Arizona Girls State that is taught and valued. We have spoken with many state officials that gave us the encouragement that not many others receive. Taking all their advice and words of wisdom will only benefit these young women.

Each and every young woman in cholla city has been able to get to know one another but not only have we been given the opportunity to do that but we also were given the chance to find ourselves. Which we did. All the smiles on these faces are genuine and it is because we have all found our inner purpose while being here at Arizona Girls Camp.



Michelle Afanou and Abigail Othman taking the oath of office. (Submitted)

Left, Cameron Mirmelli, Paola Suarez, Abigail Othman, Michelle Afanou, Emily Tarro, Nevaeh Guerro, Nadia Harris, Lizeth Murillo Banuelos, Ava VandenHuevel, Marissa Sybrant, Bryn Gibson, Jesmina Deguzman, Sasha Anand, Isabella Burton, Brecken Deal, Divya Natarajan, Alaina Kempel, Joselyn Barraza Rodriguez, Alessandra Romero, and Mya Villalba. (Submitted)

# A bump in the road

BY AUDRINA RODRIGUEZ  
Saguaro City Reporter

In the beginning of our duration of our stay at University of Arizona our cities were divided. Soon followed by our counties and state, after elections.

The Nats while campaigning used harmful words against the Feds. Though Feds at first were focusing on hyping our political party up, and not using slander. Girls State delegates are constantly told the life-long

bonds they will make during this rigorous program. We are told by the advisors that our city will become family.

Though as the week progresses it feels as if there is a divide. It feels as if the party divisions are truly becoming real. From an anonymous tip I was informed many of the girls were not clapping for opposing candidates.

Though we have opposing views a level of respect for one another should be kept,

and is deserved by every single delegate. As we all have earned our right full place as Girl State delegates.

The heat is rising in the pot of Likins Hall as there is a diverse range of beliefs. This abundance of beliefs caused controversy among many of the delegates. Disrupting the friendships and community of Girls State.

Will this be a minor bump in the road or will this divide us?



# Election results are in

BY JADE NAVARRO  
Palo Verde City Reporter

Today at around 2:16 pm after a long three days of hard campaigning, constant meetings and speeches the girls of each county took a vote on who they wanted as their state representatives such as governor and secretary of state.

At 2:00 pm the girls wait anxiously to hear the results of the elections. In the top picture is Abigail Othman girls state newly elected secretary of state taking the oath to do her duty and uphold it.

Amazing work from all candidates and such supportive girls giving personal shout outs to there opposing candidates. The room filled with great happiness and cheer as these ladies were elected!



## Meet the Future of Girls State!

BY MIKAELA GARCIA  
Palo Verde City Reporter

Amazing job Girls State! Everyone did an amazing job working on their posters, their speeches, and interacting with their peers all in an effort to hopefully gain their vote.

When the time came, our girls submitted their votes by placing their hearts into who they truly believed would be most capable for each and every position. A lot of thought and care went into every campaign, so even if you didn't win the primary or the general election, your efforts are heard and recognized at Girls State and we have all been so blessed to see what you had in store.

With this I would also like to congratulate our brand new county and state office members! You gave it your all and the girls were all able to see it.

I would also like to take this moment to thank our previous Governor and Secretary, Daniela Putu-kang and Ivana Grgic. These wonderful ladies have set the bar for what Girls State represents, so let us carry



on Girls State pride by honoring them and giving a warm welcome to who will be taking their place.

I would like to congratulate our 78th annual Arizona Girls State Governor Michelle Afanou and Secretary of State

Abigail Othman! They will return to next year's Girls State as part of their office, and they will help lead the next set of intelligent girls to run our mythical fifty-first state.

So for the last few days, cherish the girls around you, and join us all in sisterhood.

**There is a sale at the Girls State store! Stop in to see all the great prices!**



# Getting the job done

BY MEGAN BLATECKY  
Saguaro City Reporter

On June sixth the roles of Governor (Michelle Afanou) and Secretary of State (Abigail Othman) were filled by two amazing girls. Their speeches showcased their ability to handle the stress and deal with the important and controversial aspects of the job. These girls knew that by signing up they were taking on a huge amount of responsibility and they were up for the task. Both had influential and wonderful campaigns that made such an impact on everyone and they truly deserved their positions.

After the elections all the girls went to their respective meetings and the hard work began. On the county level where I was residing we began by passing out jobs and being assigned to create proposals. By the end of the night there were so many amazing proposals and though not all could be chosen everyone was heard and Kaibab county chose the best ones.

Such ones included proposals to increase resources for immigrants, awareness for the prevention of STD's, creating a stage for performers in the county fair and supporting students who have disabilities in classrooms.

All these and more were proposed and this showcased what the girls were passionate for and what they thought was most important for our community to address.

The future leaders of our community and world are being made here today and it is such an inspiration to be among them. By having these conversations and being assigned these projects it becomes so clear that all these girls are going to go on to make our world better.



**Arizona  
Girls State  
Picture Show**

*Be a part of the  
Arizona Girls State Slide  
Show by sending us your  
selfies, group pics and  
all out fun times!*

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