

KEY PLAYERS FOR 2005



GOV. JANET NAPOLITANO

Wave of conservative sets in the Republican marries means Napolitano will face a more hostile Legislature. Republicans look ahead to the 2006 election. Napolitano to play role in protecting budget spending levels, especially for grade schools and higher education, while trying to get in ground on bipartisan issues such as water planning.



REP. PETE RIOS, D-DUDLEYVILLE

Ideally respected by both sides, Rios is a master at mandating Democratic victory while crafting successful bills with Republican co-sponsors. Rios wields the most power on budget issues.



SENATE PRESIDENT KEN BENNETT, R-PRESCOTT

Despite his strong conservative credentials, Bennett has endured grumbling from some GOP corners that he's too willing to compromise in order to get legislation that Napolitano will sign. Bennett was forced to be flexible during his first two years as president, when a handful of moderates willing to vote with Democrats undercut the concept of a Republican "majority."



MICHAEL HAENER, DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS FOR GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

An affable, detail-oriented player, Haener has been walking the legislative halls for Napolitano since she was attorney general. He has a knack for identifying issues and turning points on which Napolitano can pick up Republican allies.



SEN. JAY TISHRAENY, R-CHANDLER

Relying on experience as Chandler mayor, Tishraeny has jumped early into a leadership role as Republican whip. Tishraeny is good at counting votes and finding compromises to land bills on the governor's desk. But he must find enough respect among GOP colleagues to get their commitments on bills important to Republican leaders.



JANICE PALMER, LOBBYIST FOR THE ARIZONA SCHOOL BOARD OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

Palmer, who leads a pack of lobbyists for education interest groups, is respected for her broad knowledge of intricate legal issues and funding formulas. Republicans consider her group more reasonable on the budget and school accountability than the teachers unions.



SEN. HARRY MITCHELL, D-TEMPE

A former high school civics teacher, Mitchell has been openly frustrated with the inability of Democrats to win passage of more bills, even with Napolitano as governor. Mitchell was elected Democrat assistant leader primarily on seniority. It remains to be seen whether Mitchell still has the skill to craft deals and knock heads that made him such a legend as mayor of Tempe.



CATHI HERROD, LOBBYIST FOR CENTER FOR ARIZONA POLICY

The legislative workhorse for the Scottsdale-based "family values" think tank, Herrod's persistence in previous sessions has paid off with a more conservative Legislature as Herrod now works from the inside shaping key bills on abortion and gay marriage.



HOUSE SPEAKER JIM WEIERS

Weiers receives plenty of praise for his job as speaker, and was picked for the post again, after a two-year stint in the Senate, because Republicans hope he will heal open wounds from battles between conservatives and moderates. But Weiers has no problem using the power of the speaker's office to push his agenda, which will include reining in the state budget.



CAROL KAMIN, PRESIDENT/CEO OF CHILDREN'S ACTION ALLIANCE

Kamin finds power in numbers, building coalitions among advocates for poor and working families to protect spending in these areas. Her instant and accurate analysis of budget numbers often gives her an advantage over lawmakers.



REP. GARY PIERCE, R-MESA

Viewed as a conservative whom moderates and Democrats can respect, Pierce wants to downplay overt partisanship with the governor in favor of calm deliberation as House Republican whip. But Pierce will have to deal with enemies he has made in his own backyard, led by Sen. Karen Johnson, R-Mesa.



KEVIN MCCARTHY, PRESIDENT OF ARIZONA TAX RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Representing some of the state's largest manufacturers and utilities, McCarthy is one of the most active watchdogs on government spending and tax policies. His influence will grow this year as Republicans declare business tax relief to be a top priority.