

# 'Politics Beyond the Aisle' series to explore the stories of public officials

**Series kicked off March 4 with Arizona legislators J.D. Mesnard and Junelle Caverio**

By Alexandra Bice, ASU News  
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In an effort to build a stronger connection between students and political and civic leaders, Arizona State University's School of Politics and Global Studies hosted the first event of its new series, "Politics Beyond the Aisle," on March 4 featuring Sen. J.D. Mesnard and Rep. Junelle Caverio.

The series aims to explore the stories of public officials, including how they began their careers, what motivates them to serve their communities and how they navigate a political landscape that grows increasingly complex.

"Our school's 'Politics Beyond the Aisle' initiative embodies the spirit of the ASU Charter and brings together accomplished politicians from two major parties," said [Güneş Murat Tezcür](#), the school's director and professor.

The series "highlights ASU's role as a facilitator of meaningful dialogue — one that transcends partisan divides and focuses on leadership, governance and public service. Students, faculty and public can expect an engaging conversation that reinforces ASU's commitment to fostering open discourse, civic engagement and the value of political action," Tezcür said.

The first event with Mesnard and Caverio featured two pivotal voices shaping Arizona policy in the state legislature. Mesnard took office as an Arizona representative in January 2011, and became a state senator in January 2019. He currently serves the 13th District. Caverio took office as a representative in April 2024, representing the 11th District.

The discussion, moderated by Associate Director of Undergraduate Studies and Associate Teaching Professor [Tara Lennon](#), touched on topics like the definition of public service, their greatest challenges in leadership, and advice for students looking at the same career path.

For Mesnard, public service means working to serve Arizona residents without recognition, he said, while for Cavero it means putting your passion to improve the community before partisanship.

The pair also discussed their biggest challenges in leadership in their respective roles — with Cavero mentioning the difficulties of ensuring that Arizonans' best interests are served rather than partisan ones, and Mesnard recounting the difficulties that came with overseeing the process of expelling another representative while serving as speaker of the House in 2018.

Erica Maglalang, a junior double-majoring in political science and global studies who attended the event, said that her greatest takeaway is that “the people of Arizona must always come first.”

“Regardless of party lines, if a bill benefits the people, it should be supported,” she said. “After all, once elected, senators and representatives are to serve all Arizonans — not just those who voted for them.”

More information about the next event in the series can be found on the ASU [School of Politics and Global Studies website](#).

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

**Main image**



Sen. J.D. Mesnard and Rep. Junelle Cavero participated in the School of Politics and Global Studies event, "Politics Beyond the Aisle." Photo courtesy of the School of Politics and Global Studies/ASU

**Text image(s)**



Sen. J.D. Mesnard and Rep. Junelle Cavero participating in the School of Politics and Global Studies event, "Politics Beyond the Aisle." Photo courtesy of the School of Politics and Global Studies/ASU