

THE ISSUE: LIMITS TO SUPERVISORS' CONTROL

BILL WOULD CAUSE MORE CHAOS, WASTE

The internecine war in Maricopa County government is wasteful and destructive enough.

Now, it has inspired a terribly wrongheaded bill from state Sen. Russell Pearce that would cause collateral damage across the state.

Pearce, R-Mesa, wants to strip county boards of supervisors of any power over the spending and operations of elected county officials. Senate Bill 1017 would require supervisors to appropriate a one-year chunk of money to the sheriff, county attorney, assessor, justices of the peace and other elected officials who would then have free rein to use it however they wanted.

Imagine the potential for chaos, waste, duplication and overlap if each department had its own sala-

ry schedule, purchasing system, personnel procedures and contracting setup.

Like so much overreaching legislation, this was largely inspired by a spat: Sheriff Joe Arpaio's battle with county supervisors over a bus purchase that the supervisors refused to approve.

It takes real gall to consider throwing a monkey wrench into the works for counties, which have managed to balance their budgets. The state, as Pearce well knows, hasn't.

Would legislators ever let elected state officials, such as the attorney general, operate completely out of their control? You've got to be kidding.

This pernicious legislation died last year. It belongs back in the graveyard.