

# NEWS RELEASE

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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## **Minimum Wage Change & its Impact on Child Support, Call for Comment**

PHOENIX – The Arizona Supreme Court’s Committee for an Interim Review of Child Support Guidelines has published a list of recommendations for public comment. The preliminary report and recommendations center on the change to Arizona’s minimum wage and recent changes to federal regulations. Arizona’s higher minimum wage and new federal regulations have an impact on the calculation of child support. The proposition passed by Arizona voters ushered in an immediate increase to minimum wage, as well as future increases in 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Absent changes to the Arizona Child Support Guidelines, workers earning minimum wage could be disproportionately hurt by a mechanism in the current child support calculation formula called the self-support reserve (SSR). This part of the formula exists to evaluate and verify that the paying parent is financially able to both pay child support and maintain a minimum standard of living. The increase in minimum wage may require low-income earners to pay a higher percentage of their earnings in child support, unless the SSR is also increased. The Committee recommends a change to the SSR that would be based on a percentage that allows the minimum wage to escalate without inflicting harm on low-wage earners.

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice in July established the Committee for an Interim Review of the Child Support Guidelines to study and make recommendations to ensure that Arizona parents owing child support are not harmed by the minimum wage change and to ensure that Arizona is in compliance with recent changes to the federal regulations.

New federal guidelines mandate that the states not treat incarceration the same as “voluntary unemployment” in establishing or modifying child support orders. The Committee also

recommended changes to terminology in Arizona’s Child Support Guidelines to harmonize with terminology used in recent legislation. For example, the term “custody” is now referred to as “primary parenting time.”

The Committee’s report and recommendations also clarifies the process and provides a tool for calculating support for a third-party care provider, such as a grandparent or guardian who provides primary parenting care.

The Committee’s work was focused on a few key issues and did not make changes to the schedule of basic child support obligations.

Public comment is welcome through the online public comment portal at:

<http://www.azcourts.gov/familylaw/Public-Comments-Child-Support-Guidelines>.

People are welcome to appear in person to offer public comment on these recommendations at a public hearing on October 26, 2017 starting at 10:00 AM in Room 230 of the Arizona State Courts Building at 1501 West Washington Street in Phoenix.

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