

ARIZONA JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Arizona State Courts Building
1501 W. Washington St., Room 101
Phoenix, AZ 85007

March 12, 2026

Council Members Present:

Patrick Barnes	Lea Márquez Peterson (remote)
David K. Byers	Judge Michael Peterson
Judge Karl Eppich <i>proxy for</i> <i>Judge Christopher Staring</i>	Steve Pierce
Judge Pamela Gates	Sam Saks
Clerk of Court Juan Pablo Guzman	Kathleen Schaben
Mike Hellon (remote)	Dewey Schade
Judge Randall Howe	Judge Alicia Skupin
Judge Anna Huberman	Anna C. Thomasson
Judge Jeffrey Klotz (remote)	Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer, Chair
Judge Danelle Liwski	George Weisz
Judge Steven Moss	Judge Tim Wright

Council Members Absent (excused):

Don Bivens	Kevin Robinson
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Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) Staff:

Jared Arthur	Jack Moody
Marquita Brazil	Jim Morrow
Joshua Cutlip	Abby Raddatz
Diane DeDea	Alberto Rodriguez
Jeff Fine	Jeff Schrade
Katy Fisher	Lorraine Smith
Liana Garcia	Debbie Violette
Gary Lyles	Linda Wszalek
Michael Malone	

Presenters, Guests, and Members of the Public:

Tim Eigo
Joel England
Judge Anni Hill Foster
Avi Goldenberg

Lucian Pera
Justice Kathryn H. King
Vice Chief Justice John R. Lopez IV

Welcome/Meeting Called to Order

Chief Justice Ann A. Scott Timmer, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair called for any corrections to the minutes from the Council's December 18, 2025, meeting.

MOTION: To approve the minutes from the December 18, 2025, meeting of the Arizona Judicial Council, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-01.

Judicial Branch Legislative Update

Ms. Liana Garcia, Government Affairs Director for the AOC, presented an update on the current legislative session and requested the Council's format input on the following bill proposals

- HB2976 justice courts; administration; due process

MOTION: To oppose HB2976 justice courts; administration; due process, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-02.

- SB1039 attorney discipline investigations; costs

MOTION: To oppose SB1039 attorney discipline investigations; costs, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-03.

- SB1148 supreme court; attorney licensing

MOTION: To oppose SB1148 supreme court; attorney licensing, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-04.

- SB1283 appeals court, division two; elimination

MOTION: To oppose SB1283 appeals court; division two; elimination, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-05.

- SB1314 appropriations; criminal justice; salary increases

MOTION: To support SB1314 appropriations; criminal justice; salary increases, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-06.

- SB1544 probation records; disclosure; exemptions

MOTION: To oppose SB1544 probation records; disclosure; exemptions as drafted but recognize if a suitable amendment is presented, Chief Justice Timmer, Chair has the authority to approve the amendment. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-07.

- SB1650 judicial immunity; exception

MOTION: To oppose SB1650 judicial immunity; exception, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-08.

- SCR1010 impeachable offenses

MOTION: To oppose SCR1010 impeachable offenses, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-09.

- SCR1040 justices, judges, mandatory retirement age

MOTION: To support SCR1040 justices; judges; mandatory retirement age, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed (one opposed). AJC 2026-10.

The Chair noted that a letter was received from Rachel Bretz in Scottsdale asking the Council to take a position on a number of bills (copies were provided to the Council members). The Chair stated that the Council is unable to take a position on policy issues going before the Legislature and items not listed on the Council's agenda.

Podcast Demo (taken out of order)

Mr. Alberto Rodriguez, Communications Director for the AOC, shared a demonstration of an AI tool being used to summarize and present court reports in a more digestible format.

He explained how AI is being used to create engaging audio and video content to inform the public about complex court matters, including statistical reports. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the content is being well-received and translated into multiple languages.

Commission on Access to Justice Update

Judge Anni Hill Foster, Arizona Commission on Access Justice, provided an update on the Commission's efforts to address access to justice issues in pending Rules Petitions including an overview of the process for reviewing Rules Petitions and providing the Commission's perspectives on petitions.

Arizona Code of Judicial Administration (ACJA)

Ms. Abby Raddatz, Director of the Certification and Licensing Division for the AOC, along with Lisa Hauser, Special Project Consultant for the AOC, presented proposed amendments to ACJA Section 7-201: General Requirements for the Council's review and approval.

MOTION: To support adoption of reorganization and restyling amendments to ACJA Section 7-201: General Requirements and the adoption of new ACJA Sections 7-201.01 through 7-201.39 to become effective when the program-specific code sections are amended to conform, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. AJC 2026-11.

Ms. Abby Raddatz and Ms. Marquita Brazil, Certification and Licensing Division of the AOC and Judge Anni Hill-Foster, Chair of the Committee on Alternative Business Structures, presented amendments to ACJA Section 7-209: Alternative Business Structures for the Council's review and approval.

Mr. Lucian Pera and Mr. Avi Goldenberg provided public comment in support of the amendments and urged rejection of the State Bar comments. Mr. Sam Saks, President of the State Bar of Arizona and Council member clarified that the State Bar's comment was not saying exclusively Arizona.

MOTION: To approve the modification to ACJA Section 7-209: Alternative Business Structures, as presented. The motion was seconded and passed). AJC 2026-12.

Potential Law School at NAU (taken out of order)

Justice Kathryn H. King presented on a proposed new non-ABA-accredited law school program in Arizona, specifically a potential partnership between Northern Arizona University (NAU) and the Board of Regents. Justice King noted the program would be regulated by the Arizona Supreme Court and is designed to address the state's shortage

of lawyers, particularly in rural areas. She stated that the proposed program would be more cost-effective than traditional ABA-accredited law schools and would offer a part-time, online curriculum.

Several members expressed strong support for the initiative, noting the need for more legal professionals in underserved rural areas.

Expansion of DCS Electronic Records Delivery

Mr. Jeff Fine, Senior Consultant with the AOC, presented information on the statewide rollout and benefits of a new system developed by the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS) that provides secure electronic delivery of court-ordered DCS records.

Workforce Development Certification Update

Mr. Jeff Fine and Mr. Jared Arthur, Special Projects Administrator with the Education Services Division of the AOC, presented an overview and progress update on the initiative to establish curriculum-based certification programs for entry-level court staff and court clerk positions in alignment with Goal 5.2 of the current Arizona Judicial Branch Strategic Agenda

Probate System Rollout

Ms. Debbie Violette, Project Manager with the Court Services Division of the AOC, presented on AOC's partnership with Societal to create a portal for conservators to submit annual financial reports to the Probate Court.

Follow-Up on Family Court Issues and Public Testimony from December AJC Meeting

The Chair provided an update on actions regarding family court issues, particularly in response to a tragic case involving Hope Hooten's children. Key recommendations included enhanced training for family law attorneys on mental health and domestic violence issues, as well as proposed mandatory minimum training hours for judges and court staff on these topics.

The meeting adjourned at 1:50 p.m.