

Justice for the Future

PLANNING FOR EXCELLENCE

September 17, 2019

Each year, on September 17, we pause to recognize the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution on this day in 1787.

Constitution Day provides an opportunity to reflect upon the principles enshrined in that document, including our equality under the law and the importance of an independent and impartial judiciary. These principles have guided our country's progress toward equal justice and efforts to uphold the rule of law for over two centuries.

Not long after the signing of the Constitution, the adoption of the 6th Amendment established the right to a jury trial. Jury service is the constitutional companion of this right and plays an important role in educating citizens on how our judicial system functions. Thomas Jefferson once said he considered the jury system to be “the only anchor, ever yet imagined by man, by which a government can be held to the principles of its constitution.” Today, fewer than one percent of Arizona cases are tried to a jury and as a result, fewer citizens receive the civic education provided by jury service. We must continue our efforts to educate the public about this essential constitutional function and to restore trial by jury as a means of resolving society's disputes.

On this day, it is also appropriate to recognize the work that all members of the judiciary—from our generous volunteers and community partners to our hardworking staff and judges—do every day to provide justice to all Arizonans under our state and federal constitutions. Thank you for your dedication to maintaining the rule of law as we work together to promote access to justice, strengthen our courts, and promote confidence in our judiciary.

Chief Justice Robert Brutinel