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**IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF ARIZONA**

In the Matter of:	) Supreme Court No. R-24-0004
	)
PETITION TO PERMANENTLY	) COMMENTS OF THE ARIZONA
ADOPT RULES FOR THE FAST	) COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO
TRIAL AND ALTERNATIVE	) JUSTICE IN SUPPORT OF THE
RESOLUTION PROGRAM	) PETITION
("FASTAR")	)

The Arizona Commission on Access to Justice is charged with considering and recommending innovative ways to promote access to justice for individuals who cannot afford legal counsel or who choose to represent themselves in civil cases. Established in 2014, the Commission evaluates best practices, identifies possible changes in court rules or practices to reduce barriers to access, identifies and encourages the adoption of best practices among legal service providers, and considers potential long-term funding options.

Following a presentation at the April 11, 2024, Commission meeting, a motion was made and seconded that the Commission support Rule Change Petition No. R-24-0004. After discussion by members of the Commission, that motion passed

unanimously. This Comment is a result of that formal Commission action and is intended to reflect the Commission's support of the changes requested in the Petition.

This Petition seeks to make the pilot FASTAR program a permanent option for plaintiffs in Pima County when they file cases for money damages of \$50,000 or less; the FASTAR program is an option beyond compulsory arbitration. The Petition also seeks to amend FASTAR Rule 101, which would permit appeals of the FASTAR decisions to also be handled under the FASTAR Rules, and FASTAR Rule 126(a)(2) to remove the word "pilot" from the current rule. The FASTAR program enhances access to justice because it allows cases to be decided quicker than compulsory arbitration. The average length of a FASTAR case is 175 days, and the average length of a compulsory arbitration case is eight months. The only concerns about the Petition are the strict deadlines in the program. For instance, complaints must be served in 60 days, with courts allowing an extra 30-day extension. The Petition states that litigants can remove their case from the FASTAR program if they believe service will take longer. The Commission, however, suggests the program may want to consider a good cause extension to the strict deadlines to support access to justice for its litigants.

For these reasons, the Commission supports the adoption of the proposed amendments requested in Petition No. R-24-0004.

DATED this 29th day of April 2024.

_____/s/_____
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