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To the Honorable Justices of the Arizona Supreme Court:

We write to express our opposition to the Petition to amend Arizona Supreme Court Rule 32(A)-(M), which seeks to eliminate a mandatory unified State Bar of Arizona and transfer regulation and continuing legal education responsibilities to the Supreme Court.

We believe the proposed petition undermines the State Bar of Arizona's ability to perform vital functions, both in the legal profession and the public at large. These include serving as a point of engagement for lawyers who wish to promote access to justice, increasing attorney competence, and helping to educate the public about legal issues and their legal rights.

A unified Bar also fosters a strong sense of collegiality and mutual support within the legal community, which indirectly benefits the public. The bar provides a platform for networking, mentorship, and the exchange of ideas among lawyers from diverse backgrounds and practice areas. This interconnectedness promotes a more cooperative and less adversarial legal environment, ultimately contributing to a more efficient and just legal system.

Finally, in states without a unified bar, many lawyers join the voluntary statewide organization to access the benefits and value of a statewide entity, while also paying the mandatory fee for the regulatory mechanism. In these cases, combined annual fees to both organizations may be higher. The State Bar of Arizona offers cost-saving and practice aide benefits for less than what could be offered by a state operated agency or voluntary bar.

For these reasons we respectfully urge the Court to oppose this petition.

Respectfully Submitted,

Arizona Lawyers for Equal Justice Steering Committee
Hon. Carol Scott Berry, ret.
Booker T Evans
Hon. Frankie Jones
Elena Nethers
Hon. Roxanne Song Ong, ret.