



SOUTHERN ARIZONA
LEGAL AID, INC.[®]

3 May 2021

Committee of Presiding Judges
c/o Administrative Office of the Courts
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Dear Committee of Presiding Judges:

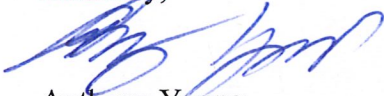
Southern Arizona Legal Aid, Inc., joins the Domestic Violence Law Clinic, University of Arizona James E. Rogers College of Law and the Committee on the Impact of Domestic Violence and the Courts, in supporting this rule change to formalize a procedure for allowing a Plaintiff to amend his or her petition for an Order of Protection to add important allegations that have been initially left off.

SALA attorneys have seen many plaintiffs over the years who have filed an application/petition for an Order of Protection *pro per* leaving out relevant and important acts of domestic violence. This is a function of lack of knowledge of what crimes qualify as enumerated acts of domestic violence and it is also a function of a victim of domestic violence coming to terms with the victimization. Later, upon engaging legal assistance, the determination is made that this missing allegation is highly relevant and necessary to be added to the allegations already made on the application. The process for amending an application prior to the contested hearing taking place has been ad hoc and confusing up until now for practitioners and virtually impossible for *pro per* plaintiffs. This is because the rules do not currently speak to this common occurrence.

Formalizing the procedure in the Rules of Protective Order procedure will achieve justice for survivors of domestic violence. Judicial economy will be served, Due Process will be respected, and this will also provide a smoother procedure for lawyers such as our staff representing survivors in contested Order of Protection proceedings. Thank you for your consideration.

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Sincerely,



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