



County Supervisors A S S O C I A T I O N o f a r i z o n a

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Resolution Number 2-24

A Resolution of the County Supervisors Association of Arizona Calling on the State and Administrative Office of the Courts to Work Collaboratively to Provide Sufficient State Funding for Probation and the Courts, Improve the Efficient Deployment of Taxpayer Resources, and to Identify a Long-term Funding Solution for the Court System.

WHEREAS, the Arizona Constitution vests the judicial power of the state in an integrated judicial department and provides for a single Superior Court, and

WHEREAS, the Administrative Office of the Courts is responsible for administering the centralized court system, and

WHEREAS, for administrative convenience the state has delegated partial responsibility for funding to the county government level with minimal authority to control cost drivers within the court system, and

WHEREAS, for decades the complex dual county-state funding relationship has created funding and administrative challenges for counties, the courts, and the state, as evidenced by the numerous studies and efforts to examine the funding structure for the courts, and

WHEREAS, non-county funding sources, like state appropriations, have not kept up with costs in the court system, growing the county burden for funding from 54% of total court funding in FY 2000 to almost 70% in FY 2023, while the state's share of funding declined from 31% to 17% and

WHEREAS, although counties receive revenue from court fines and fees that defray a portion of the cost of the court system, revenues generated by fines and fees have not kept up with increased costs, declining by more than 10% in just five years, and

WHEREAS, court costs are driven largely by the state's policies and administrative decisions by the Administrative Office of the Courts and presiding judges, and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, state lawmakers have enacted changes that have reduced available resources and increased county court costs, and

WHEREAS, judicial discretion to reduce fees collected and state policy choices, like repealing certain court-ordered fees for juveniles, reduce resources available to fund the courts without modifying program mandates or providing state funds to offset the local financial impact, and

WHEREAS, although the state chose to fund double-digit salary increases in other public safety positions, since FY 2021 state lawmakers have failed to provide sufficient ongoing funding to meet the needs of the Superior Court's probation function,

WHEREAS, this lack of sufficient, reliable state resources for probation has resulted in ongoing uncertainty, administrative challenges and the potential for a funding gap exceeding \$10 million in FY 2026, and



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WHEREAS, in a late amendment to the FY 2025 state budget, lawmakers chose to increase superior court judge salaries by \$20,000, and

WHEREAS, that last-minute policy change will create at least an additional \$7.7 million in annual county costs for superior court judge, court commissioner and justice of the peace salaries when fully implemented, and

WHEREAS, without the state providing additional resources for the court system, the burden for funding the state's judiciary will continue to be shifted to the county taxpayer, placing upward pressure on property tax rates over time.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the County Supervisors Association of Arizona calls on State Lawmakers and the Administrative Office of the Courts to:

- Provide sufficient ongoing state funding for probation officer salaries in FY 2026 without shifting additional burden to the county general fund, and
- Implement policies that effectuate greater state support for the court system, particularly in areas where state policy choices are driving additional costs, and
- Improve the efficient deployment of taxpayer resources, and
- Find a sustainable funding solution for the judiciary that works for the counties, the state, and the courts.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 9th day of October, 2024.

Stephen Q. Miller
President, County Supervisors Association of Arizona
Pinal County Supervisor

ATTEST:

Craig A. Sullivan, Executive Director
County Supervisors Association of Arizona