

# AGENDA MATERIAL

Pima County

DATE 9/21/21

ITEM NO. RA22

## Consolidated Justice Court TUCSON, ARIZONA 85701-1199

HONORABLE KENDRICK A. WILSON  
JUDGE  
PRECINCT NUMBER NINE

240 N. STONE AVENUE  
PHONE (520) 724-3505  
FAX: (520) 222-1842

September 20, 2021

Dear Honorable Chairwoman Sharon Bronson  
Supervisor Rex Scott  
Supervisor Matt Heinz  
Supervisor Steve Christy  
Supervisor Adelita Grijalva:

I write to encourage the Board of Supervisors to reject Item Number 22 at tomorrow's meeting, which would reduce the number of justices of the peace in Pima County Consolidated Justice Court from eight to seven. I believe this unnecessary move would serve only to deprive members of the community of access to justice.

I know from my own calendar that a significant backlog of driving under the influence (DUI) cases has accumulated as we have avoided conducting jury trials during the pandemic. As we have begun to reschedule jury trials, I currently have 14 which have been set, along with an additional 20 that are awaiting trial dates. While this may seem insignificant, each of these trials takes at least one full day, and many are scheduled for multiple days, which requires other court business to take a back seat. This has already begun to increase as law enforcement begins more aggressively enforcing DUI laws. Many law enforcement agencies drastically reduced traffic stops during the pandemic for officer safety.

Of particular concern to me is access to justice for victims of domestic violence. Misdemeanor level acts of domestic violence pose a significant risk to victim safety while charges are pending, and offenders are very rarely held in custody awaiting trial on misdemeanors. Consequently, the longer that domestic violence victims must wait for trial, the more danger they may face. The backlog of trials means that victims and defendants will have to wait longer for cases to resolve, in a system that already takes too long.

I personally conduct multiple discretionary functions, including holding regular review hearings to ensure that defendants complete court-ordered counseling or treatment and conducting settlement conferences to avoid unnecessary trials. Ensuring that defendants complete required treatment and the reduction of unnecessary trials provides a significant benefit to the community. These functions will inevitably suffer if the backlog of trials becomes unmanageable.

Reducing the number of judges will not promote community safety, nor will it increase efficiency. The foreseeable result is that members of our community would be denied access to justice.

Sincerely,



Kendrick A. Wilson, Justice of the Peace  
Precinct 9

SEP 20 2021 03:53 PM CLK DF-UP