

# Justice for the Future

PLANNING FOR EXCELLENCE

September 17, 2021

Every year on September 17, the United States recognizes the anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

The U.S. Constitution allows for change and growth and has been amended 17 times, adding 27 amendments since its signing. This year we highlight the adoption of the 6th Amendment, establishing a defendant's right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury.

*In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.*

The Arizona Supreme Court's Strategic Agenda calls for maintaining a jury system that promotes participation, fairness, and the oversight to ensure that only impartial jurors are seated on juries.

In August 2021, the Arizona Supreme Court approved a rule change to eliminate peremptory challenges in jury selection, beginning January 1, 2022. A peremptory challenge allows a juror to be excluded from considering a case without having to state a reason for the juror's exclusion. This groundbreaking change is a first in the nation for a state court system and continues Arizona's leadership in jury innovation and reform.

Historically, peremptory challenges have been criticized because they have been used to dismiss jurors based on their race rather than because of any perceived bias. Eliminating peremptory challenges is intended to combat discrimination in the selection of jurors, resulting in juries that represent the community and that allow all citizens an equal opportunity to serve on a jury.

The court continues its commitment to promoting public trust and confidence in the jury system with a renewed focus on juries and the need to ensure that they fairly represent a cross-section of the local community from which they are assembled.

Please join the judiciary this year as we celebrate our Constitution and reflect on and the rights we enjoy and the promise of equal justice under the law enumerated in the Constitution.

For more information this Constitution Day about the Arizona's judicial branch's jury reform efforts, see the [Strategic Agenda](#) and [The Task Force on Jury Data Collection, Practices, and Procedures](#).

Chief Justice Robert Brutinel