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13			
14	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA		
15	IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA		
16			
17	WARREN PETERSEN, in his official capacity as President of the Arizona Senate;	No.	
18	BEN TOMA, in his official capacity as		
	Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives,	VERIFIED SPECIAL ACTION COMPLAINT FOR	
19	Plaintiffs,	DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF	
20	V.		
21	ADRIAN FONTES, in his official capacity		
22	as Arizona Secretary of State,		
23	Defendant.		
24	,,		
25	Plaintiffs bring this verified special action complaint and hereby allege as follows:		
26	SUMMARY OF THE CASE		
27	1. "The legislature has the exclusive power to declare what the law shall be."		
28	State v. Prentiss, 163 Ariz. 81, 85 (1989); see also Ariz. Const. art. IV.		

- 2. The Legislature has exercised this exclusive authority by constructing a detailed statutory scheme governing elections, codified in Titles 16 and 19, and specifically delegating the authority to the Secretary of State to create an Elections Procedures Manual ("EPM") on a specified set of topics.
- 3. Instead of creating an elections procedures manual, Secretary of State Adrian Fontes has created a vast, elections *policy* manual. While certain sections of this manual are authorized by statute, scores of the manual's provisions are not specifically authorized by statute or are in direct conflict with other statutes.
- 4. By issuing instructions to local elections officials throughout Arizona that exceed the scope, nullify or amend an express statutory provision through an EPM rule, the Secretary has exceeded his lawful jurisdiction to prescribe procedures pursuant to A.R.S. § 16-452 and other applicable laws. Because the integrity of Arizona's elections and faithful adherence to the separation of powers are matters of fundamental importance under our State Constitution, *see* Ariz. Const. art. III & art. VII, § 12, the Secretary's errors must be remedied.

PARTIES

- 5. Plaintiff Warren Petersen is the President of the Arizona State Senate for the 2023–2024 legislative sessions.
- 6. Plaintiff Ben Toma is the Speaker of the Arizona House of Representatives for the 2023–2024 legislative sessions.
- 7. Defendant Adrian Fontes is the Secretary of State of Arizona and is named in this action in his official capacity only. The Secretary is a division of the executive department of the government of the State of Arizona with its primary address in Maricopa County. Under A.R.S. § 16-452, the Secretary is responsible for promulgating an EPM every two years, which, upon approval by the Governor and the Attorney General, has the force of law. In addition, the Secretary is the chief state election officer, *see* A.R.S. § 16-142(A)(1).

- 8. The Legislature has institutional interests in defending the proper scope of authority delegated to other branches of government, including the Secretary. See Biggs v. Cooper, 236 Ariz. 415, 418 ¶ 11 (2014) (citing with approval U.S. Supreme Court reasoning that found the Legislature had an interest in "maintaining the effectiveness" of a vote); see also A.R.S. § 12-1832; Ariz. Pub. Integrity Alliance v. Fontes, 250 Ariz. 58, 62 ¶¶ 10–11 (2020); Ariz. State Legislature v. Ariz. Indep. Redistricting Comm'n, 576 U.S. 787, 803–04 (2015); Priorities USA v. Nessel, 978 F.3d 976, 980–81 (6th Cir. 2020) ("Denying the legislature standing to defend its own law would allow the state executive to nullify a state statute without any ultimate judicial determination.").
- 9. By acting in excess of his statutory authority or acting in conflict with statutory provisions, the Secretary's promulgation of the EPM causes the Legislature institutional injury because it impedes the implementation of a validly enacted law and purports to exercise power that the Constitution entrusts exclusively to the legislative branch. See Biggs, 236 Ariz. 415, ¶ 9 (reasoning institutional legislative injury is present if an executive action, a veto, "improperly overrides a validly enacted law"). Courts have described institutional injuries to the Legislature to include "disruption of the legislative process," "a usurpation of [legislative] authority," "nullification of votes" or an intrusion into the Legislature's constitutionally assigned role. See Tenn. Gen. Assembly v. United States Dep't of State, 931 F.3d 499, 508, 514 (6th Cir. 2019); Ariz. State Legislature, 576 U.S. at 803–04; see also Coleman v. Miller, 307 U.S. 433, 438 (1939); U.S. House of Representatives v. Burwell, 130 F. Supp. 3d 53, 67 (D.C. Cir. 2015); Cochise Cnty. v. Kirschner, 171 Ariz. 258, 261–62 (App. 1992); ("Any excursion by an administrative body beyond the legislative guidelines is treated as an usurpation of constitutional powers vested only in the major branch of government.").
- 10. As leaders of the Arizona Legislature, the Speaker and President have authority to take legal action to prevent institutional injuries to the Legislature. State of Arizona, *Senate Rules*, 56th Legislature 2023-2024, Rule 2(N), https://bit.ly/3WXFLDv (authorizing the President "to bring or assert in any forum on behalf of the Senate any claim

or right arising out of any injury to the Senate's powers or duties under the constitution or laws of this state"); State of Arizona, *Rules of the Ariz. House of Representatives*, 56th Legislature 2023-2024, Rule 4(K), https://bit.ly/3HuL9bz (authorizing the Speaker to do the same on behalf of the Arizona House of Representatives); Ariz. Const. art. IV, pt. 2, § 8 (authorizing each house of the Legislature to "determine its own rules of procedure").

- 11. There is a controversy between the parties concerning the lawfulness of certain provisions of the Secretary's 2023 EPM and a judgment of the Court will resolve that controversy. The Secretary's 2023 EPM poses an existing and ongoing threat to the application of existing conflicting statutes. Thus, Plaintiffs have a real and present need to know whether the offending provisions of the 2023 EPM are facially valid.
- 12. Plaintiffs lack an equally plain, speedy and adequate remedy at law to compel the Secretary to act consistent with controlling statutory law. In the alternative, special action relief thus is necessary to ensure that the EPM aligns with the statutes that created it. *See* Ariz. R. Spec. Action P. 3(b).

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 13. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Article 6, § 14 of the Arizona Constitution, A.R.S. §§ 12-123, 12-1801, 12-1831, and Arizona Rule of Special Action Procedure 3(a)–(b).
- 14. Venue lies in Maricopa County pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-401(16) and Arizona Rule of Special Action Procedure 4(b) because Defendant resides and holds office in Maricopa County.
 - 15. This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

- 16. The Arizona Legislature is constitutionally vested with the authority to enact "laws to secure the purity of elections and guard against abuses of the elective franchise." Ariz. Const. art. 7, § 12.
- 17. To that end, the Legislature has enacted laws in Title 16 and 19 related to elections, electors, and initiative, referendum, and recall measures.

- 18. Relevant here is the Legislature's specific delegation to the Secretary to "prescribe rules to achieve and maintain the maximum degree of correctness, impartiality, uniformity and efficiency on the procedures for early voting and voting, and of producing, distributing, collecting, counting, tabulating and storing ballots" and to "adopt rules regarding fax transmittal of unvoted ballots, ballot requests, voted ballots and other election materials to and from absent uniformed and overseas citizens and shall adopt rules regarding internet receipt of request for federal postcard applications" A.R.S. § 16-452(A).\frac{1}{2}
- 19. These statutory delegations are specific and exhaustive, meaning that if a provision of the EPM is not authorized by one of these delegations, then it cannot carry the force of law. *Leach v. Hobbs*, 250 Ariz. 572, 576 ¶ 21 (2021).
- 20. These rules are required to "be prescribed in an official instructions and procedures manual" known as the EPM, and must "be issued not later than December 31 of each odd-numbered year immediately preceding the general election." A.R.S. § 16-452(B).
- 21. The Secretary must submit a draft EPM to the Governor and Attorney General, and the Governor and Attorney General must approve it. *Id.*
- 22. "Once adopted, the EPM has the force of law; any violation of an EPM rule is punishable as a class two misdemeanor." *Ariz. Pub. Integrity Alliance v. Fontes*, 250 Ariz. 58, 63 ¶ 16 (2020) (citing A.R.S. § 16-452(C)).

The 2023 EPM

- 23. On or around July 31, 2023, the Secretary published a 268-page draft EPM for public comment.
- 24. The Secretary solicited public comments on the draft EPM from August 1, 2023, through August 15, 2023.

¹ The Secretary has been granted limited authority to include other topics in the EPM. *See also* A.R.S. §§ 16-168(I), 16-246(G), 16-315(D), 16-341(H), 16-411(B)(5)(b), 16-449(A)–(B), 16-543(A)–(C), 16-544(B), 16-579(A)(2), (E), 16-602(B), 16-926(A), 16-938(B), 19-118(A), 19-121(A)(5), 19-205.01(A).

- 25. On August 14, 2023, Plaintiffs submitted a public comment objecting to various provisions of the EPM on grounds that those provisions were in conflict with Arizona statutes or otherwise exceeded the Secretary's authority.²
- 26. On September 30, 2023, the Secretary published a 268-page updated draft EPM and transmitted the same to the Governor and Attorney General for their review and approval under A.R.S. § 16-452.
- On Saturday, December 30, 2023, (the penultimate day to finalize a draft), 27. the Secretary published the "final" EPM, now 385 pages, which includes multiple provisions that were not present in the July or September drafts, with the approval of the Governor and Attorney General. On January 11, 2024, the Secretary published an updated "final" EPM, correcting and adding dates in Chapter 15 (hereinafter referred to as the "2023 EPM").
 - 28. A true and accurate copy of the 2023 EPM is attached as **Exhibit 1**.
- 29. Several provisions of the 2023 EPM are problematic, including ones that were never published for public comment and added last minute, on information and belief by request of the Governor and/or Attorney General.
- The 2023 EPM includes several references to ongoing litigation. In instances 30. where rulings align with the Secretary's policy's preferences, the EPM incorporates nonfinal and non-injunctive rulings from ongoing legal proceedings. See, e.g., Ex. 1 at 3 n.5, 12 n.8-9, 14 n.11, 15 n.13-15, 22 n.19-20, 40 n.25-26, 41 n.27 (rulings in Mi Familia Vota v. Fontes., D. Ariz. docket no. CV-22-00509-PHX-SRB). In other instances, the Secretary merely cites to the existence of litigation, without incorporating the rulings. See, e.g., Ex. 1 at 83 n.42 (not incorporating substantive rulings in Arizona Free Enterprise Club v. Fontes, Yavapai County Super. Ct. docket no. S1300CV2023-00202, stating only that "litigation is pending on this issue").

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² https://www.azsenaterepublicans.com/_files/ugd/2f3470_68a6d97b7c1645bd985057ffde 62836b.pdf

- 31. While it may not be problematic to inform local elections officials that certain laws may be impacted by on-going proceedings for awareness purposes, the 2023 EPM inconsistently adopts non-final rulings into its substantive rules and improperly codifies non-final rulings, as such rulings may later be reversed or modified.
- 32. The inconsistent incorporation of court rulings based on the Secretary's policy preferences is troubling and will inevitably lead to confusion among elections officials—which defeats the statutory aim of the EPM "to achieve and maintain the maximum degree of correctness, impartiality, uniformity and efficiency" in certain election-related procedures. A.R.S. § 16-452(A). Worse yet, the Secretary's references to ongoing litigation also effectively strips the appeal rights of litigants in those ongoing cases by codifying the rulings into the 2023 EPM, which carries the force of law.
- 33. Other provisions conflict with the plain language of statutes or lack any statutory authorization.

Non-Residency of Juror Questionnaire Rule

34. In Chapter 1 (Voter Registration), Section 9 (Voter Registration List Maintenance), Subsection C(1) (County Recorders' Duty to Cancel Registrant Information: Summary Report from the Jury Commissioner or Jury Manager of Voters who Are Not Residents of the County of State), the 2023 EPM states that upon reviewing the summary report and identifying a true match:

[T]he County Recorder shall send the person notice by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid, preaddressed return form requesting the person confirm by signing under penalty of perjury that the person is a resident of the county and is not knowingly registered to vote in another county or another state. The notice shall inform the person that failure to return the form within thirty-five days will result in the person's registration *being put into inactive status* and may ultimately lead to cancelation of their voter registration.

Ex. 1 at 41 (emphasis added).

- 35. However, A.R.S. § 16-165(A)(9) provides that:
- [A] county recorder *shall cancel a registration* . . . [w]hen the county recorder receives written information from the person registered that the person has a change of address outside the county, including when the county recorder . . . [r]eceives a summary report from the jury commissioner or jury manager pursuant to section 21-314 indicating that the person has stated that

the person is not a resident of the county. Before the county recorder cancels a registration pursuant to this subdivision, the county recorder shall send the person notice by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid preaddressed return form requesting the person confirm by signing under penalty of perjury that the person is a resident of the county and is not knowingly registered to vote in another county or another state. The notice shall inform the person that failure to return the form within thirty-five days will result in the person's registration being canceled. If the person fails to return the notice within thirty-five days the county recorder shall cancel the person's registration.

(emphasis added).

36. Thus, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(1) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-165(A)(9).

Investigations of Citizenship Status Rule

- 37. In Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(2)(a) (County Recorders' Duty to Cancel Registrant Information: Information that a Person Registered Is Not a United States Citizen Obtaining Non-Citizenship Information), the 2023 EPM states that although there are "several ways in which a County Recorder may obtain information pursuant to A.R.S. § 16-165 that a registrant is not a U.S. Citizen[, . . .] third-party allegations of non-citizenship are not enough to initiate this process." Ex. 1 at 42.
- 38. However, A.R.S. § 16-165(I) states that the county recorder should initiate this process when he or she "has reason to believe [the person is] not [a] United States citizen[]."
- 39. The plain language of this provision does not exclude third-party allegations if the allegation provides the county recorder with a reason to believe the applicant is not a U.S. citizen.
- 40. Thus, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(2)(a) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-165(I).

AEVL Effective Date Rule

41. In Chapter 2 (Early Voting), Section 1 (Ballot-by-Mail), Subsection B(7) (Requests to be Placed on the Active Early Voting List: Removal from the AEVL), the 2023 EPM discusses Senate Bill ("S.B.") 1485's new statutory requirement (A.R.S. § 16-

544(H)(4)) that requires the county recorder to send Active Early Voting List ("<u>AEVL</u>") removal notices after the voter fails to vote in any election in two consecutive election cycles. Ex. 1 at 61–62.

- 42. The 2023 EPM directs that "[b]ecause the 2022 election cycle began before S.B. 1485 (2022)[³] took effect and S.B. 1485 does not apply retroactively, the first two full election cycles after S.B. 1485's effective date are the 2024 and 2026 election cycles. Therefore, the first AEVL removal notices must be sent out by January 15, 2027 to AEVL voters who vote by early ballot in zero eligible elections in the 2024 and 2026 election cycles." Ex. 1 at 61 n.34.
- 43. However, because A.R.S. § 16-544(H)(4) became effective during the 2022 election cycle, the registrant's subsequent voting (or non-voting) in the 2022 and 2024 election cycles must be given full effect and the AEVL removal notices must be sent out in 2025.
- 44. Thus, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 2, Section 1, Subsection B(7) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-544.

Validity of Circulator Registrations Rule

45. In Chapter 6 (Regulation of Petition Circulators), Section 2 (Circulator Registration Procedures), Subsection C (Circulator Registration Procedures), the 2023 EPM states that "[t]he requirement to list certain information on the circulator portal does not mean that a circulator's signatures shall be disqualified if the circulator makes a mistake or inconsistency in listing that information (e.g., a phone number or email address that is entered incorrectly; a residential address that doesn't match the residential address listed on that circulator's petition sheets; etc.)." Ex. 1 at 119 n.58.

³ Although the 2023 EPM indicates that S.B. 1485 was passed in 2022, it was actually passed by the Fifty-Fifth Legislature, First Regular Session in 2021 and signed by Governor Ducey on May 11, 2021. 2021 Ariz. Legis. Serv. Ch. 359 (2021). S.B. 1485 became effective on September 29, 2021. https://www.azleg.gov/general-effective-dates/.

46. However, A.R.S. § 19-118(B) requires that the circulator must submit his or her "full name, residence address, telephone number and email address" and an affidavit that "all of the information provided is correct to the best of [his or her] knowledge."

47. Because "statutory requirements for statewide initiative measures must be strictly construed and persons using the initiative process must strictly comply with those [] statutory requirements," A.R.S. § 19-102.01(A), the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 6, Section 2, Subsection C directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 19-118(B).

Duty to Canvass Rules

- 48. In Chapter 13 (Certifying Election Results), Section 2 (Canvassing the Election), Subsection A(2) (County Board of Supervisors Canvassing Duties: Scope of Duty to Canvass), the 2023 EPM states that "[t]he Board of Supervisors has a non-discretionary duty to canvass the returns as provided by the County Recorder or other officer in charge of elections and has no authority to change vote totals, reject the election results, or delay certifying results without express statutory authority or court order." Ex. 1 at 248.
- 49. While A.R.S. §§ 16-642, 16-643, and 16-646 require the Board to conduct a canvass by a certain deadline, it also empowers the Board to "determin[e] the vote of the county."
- 50. The Board's statutory duty to canvass the vote does not necessarily require the Board to accept the returns in the form provided by the election official or vote in a certain way regarding accuracy of returns.
- 51. Thus, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection A(2) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. §§ 16-642, 16-643, and 16-646.
- 52. Similarly, in Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection B(2) (Secretary of State's Canvassing Duties: Scope of Duty to Canvass), the 2023 EPM states that "Secretary of State has a non-discretionary duty to canvass the returns" but "[i]f the official canvass of any county has not been received by [the] deadline, the Secretary of State must proceed with the state canvass without including the votes of the missing county." Ex. 1 at 252.

- 53. However, Arizona law does not allow the Secretary of State to disenfranchise the voters of an entire county. A.R.S. § 16-648(C) expressly states that "if the official canvass of any county has not been received on the fourth Monday following the general election, the canvass shall be postponed from day to day, not to exceed thirty days from the date of the election, until canvasses from all counties are received." (emphasis added).
- 54. Because the statute requires both a timely and complete canvass, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection B(2) that the Secretary can or should proceed without an entire county's votes directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-648(C).

COUNT I

Non-Residency of Juror Questionnaire Rule Conflicts with Statute (Special Action, Declaratory, and Injunctive Relief)
(Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 16-165; Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65)

- 55. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 56. Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(1) of the 2023 EPM states that upon reviewing the summary report and identifying a true match:

[T]he County Recorder shall send the person notice by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid, preaddressed return form requesting the person confirm by signing under penalty of perjury that the person is a resident of the county and is not knowingly registered to vote in another county or another state. The notice shall inform the person that failure to return the form within thirty-five days will result in the person's registration *being put into inactive status* and may ultimately lead to cancelation of their voter registration.

Ex. 1 at 41 (emphasis added).

- 57. However, A.R.S. § 16-165(A)(9) provides that:
- [A] county recorder shall cancel a registration . . .[w]hen the county recorder receives written information from the person registered that the person has a change of address outside the county, including when the county recorder . . . [r]eceives a summary report from the jury commissioner or jury manager pursuant to section 21-314 indicating that the person has stated that the person is not a resident of the county. Before the county recorder cancels a registration pursuant to this subdivision, the county recorder shall send the person notice by forwardable mail and a postage prepaid preaddressed return form requesting the person confirm by signing under penalty of perjury that the person is a resident of the county and is not knowingly registered to vote in another county or another state. The notice shall inform

the person that failure to return the form within thirty-five days will result in the person's registration being canceled. If the person fails to return the notice within thirty-five days the county recorder shall cancel the person's registration.

(emphasis added).

- 58. This provision of the 2023 EPM conflicts with A.R.S. § 16-165(A)(9) because under the same circumstances, the 2023 EPM allows the county recorder to place a voter on the inactive list while the statute *requires* that the county recorder cancel the registration.
- 59. If an "EPM provision . . . directly conflicts with the express and mandatory provisions of" a statute, "it exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization and is therefore void." *Ariz. All. for Retired Ams., Inc. v. Crosby*, 537 P.3d 818, 823–24 (Ariz. App. 2023); *see also Leibsohn v. Hobbs*, 254 Ariz. 1, 7 ¶ 22 (2022) ("[A]n EPM regulation that contradicts statutory requirements does not have the force of law."); Ariz. R. Special Action Proc. 3(b).
- 60. Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that this Court declare Non-Residency of Juror Questionnaire Rule void, and award special action and injunctive relief to enjoin the implementation of the same.

COUNT II

Investigations of Citizenship Status Rule Conflicts with Statute
(Special Action, Declaratory, and Injunctive Relief)
(Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 16-165; Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65)

- 61. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 62. Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(2)(a) of the 2023 EPM states that although there are "several ways in which a County Recorder may obtain information pursuant to A.R.S. § 16-165 that a registrant is not a U.S. Citizen[, . . .] third-party allegations of non-citizenship are not enough to initiate this process." Ex. 1 at 42.
- 63. However, A.R.S. § 16-165(I) states that the county recorder should initiate this process when he or she "has reason to believe [the person is] not [a] United States citizen[]."

- 64. The plain language of A.R.S. § 16-165 indicates that "reason to believe" is a low standard that may include third-party allegations.
- 65. For example, in the criminal context, the "reason-to-believe standard requires a level of reasonable belief similar to that required to support probable cause" and includes information from other sources, so long as that information is reasonably trustworthy. *State v. Smith*, 208 Ariz. 20, 23–24 ¶¶ 10–12 (App. 2004) (citing *State v. Spears*, 184 Ariz. 277, 284 (1996) (explaining that probable cause exists when the police receives "reasonably trustworthy information and circumstances [that] would *lead a person* of reasonable caution to believe an offense *has* been committed")).
- 66. Thus, the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-165(I) does not exclude third-party allegations as a basis to trigger an inquiry, if the allegation provides the county recorder with a reason to believe the applicant is not a U.S. citizen.
- 67. As a result, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsection C(2)(a) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-165(I).
- 68. If an "EPM provision . . . directly conflicts with the express and mandatory provisions of" a statute, "it exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization and is therefore void." *Ariz. Alliance for Retired Ams., Inc.*, 537 P.3d at 823–24 ¶ 18; *see also Leibsohn*, 254 Ariz. at 7 ¶ 22 ("[A]n EPM regulation that contradicts statutory requirements does not have the force of law."); Ariz. R. Special Action Proc. 3(b).
- 69. Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that this Court declare Investigations of Citizenship Status Rule void, and award special action and injunctive relief to enjoin the implementation of the same.

COUNT III

AEVL Effective Date Rule Conflicts with Statute (Special Action, Declaratory, and Injunctive Relief) (Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 16-544; Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65)

70. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.

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- 71. Chapter 2, Section 1, Subsection B(7) of the 2023 EPM directs that "[b]ecause the 2022 election cycle began before S.B. 1485 (2022) took effect and S.B. 1485 does not apply retroactively, the first two full election cycles after S.B. 1485's effective date are the 2024 and 2026 election cycles. Therefore, the first AEVL removal notices must be sent out by January 15, 2027 to AEVL voters who vote by early ballot in zero eligible elections in the 2024 and 2026 election cycles." Ex. 1 at 61 n. 34.
- 72. A.R.S. 16-544(H)(4) requires the recorder to send an early ballot by mail to a voter who has registered for the AEVL, unless the voter "fails to vote an early ballot in all elections for two consecutive elections cycles."
- The term "election' means any regular primary or regular general election 73. for which there was a federal race on the ballot or for which a city or town candidate primary or first election or city or town candidate second, general or runoff election was on the ballot" and does not apply to special taxing district elections under A.R.S. § 16-191 or special district mail ballot elections under title 16, chapter 4, article 8.1. A.R.S. § 16-544(H)(4).
- 74. A.R.S. § 16-544(H)(4) became effective in September of 2021, mid-way through the 2022 election cycle.
- 75. However, upon the law's effective date, several qualifying elections remained outstanding, most notably, the 2022 primary and general elections.⁴
- 76. Accordingly, voters still had an opportunity to vote in any one of the several elections in 2022 and 2024 after the law's effective date to avoid receiving an AEVL removal notice in 2025.
- 77. "In Arizona, it is conclusively settled that laws are not retroactive simply because they relate to past events." Anderson v. Indus. Comm'n of Ariz., 306 Ariz. 411, 413 ¶ 9 (App. 2003).

⁴ https://www.azcleanelections.gov/arizona-elections/past-election-list

- 78. Rather, "any right conferred by statute may be taken away by statute before it has become vested." *Id.* ¶¶ 9-12 (reasoning that so long as individual had notice to change conduct before losing rights, a law can change the consequences of a future event on a vested right).
- 79. Moreover, the voter is not removed from the AEVL list until he or she fails to respond to the notice triggered by the voter's absence in two election cycles.
- 80. Thus, predicating the issuance of an AEVL renewal notice on a registrant's subsequent voting (or non-voting) in the 2022 and 2024 election cycles does not constitute a "retroactive" application of the statute and the AEVL removal notices must be sent out no later than January 15, 2025.
- 81. As a result, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 2, Section 1, Subsection B(7) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-544.
- 82. If an "EPM provision . . . directly conflicts with the express and mandatory provisions of" a statute, "it exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization and is therefore void." *Ariz. All. for Retired Ams., Inc.*, 537 P.3d at 823–24 ¶ 18; *see also Leibsohn*, 254 Ariz. at 7 ¶ 22 ("[A]n EPM regulation that contradicts statutory requirements does not have the force of law."); Ariz. R. Special Action Proc. 3(b).
- 83. Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that this Court declare the AEVL Effective Date Rule void, and award special action and injunctive relief to enjoin the implementation of the same.

COUNT IV

Validity of Circulator Registrations Rule Conflicts with Statute (Special Action, Declaratory, and Injunctive Relief)
(Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 19-102.01, 19-118; Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65)

- 84. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 85. Chapter 6, Section 2, Subsection C of the 2023 EPM states that "[t]he requirement to list certain information on the circulator portal does not mean that a

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circulator's signatures shall be disqualified if the circulator makes a mistake or inconsistency in listing that information (e.g., a phone number or email address that is entered incorrectly; a residential address that doesn't match the residential address listed on that circulator's petition sheets; etc.)." Ex. 1 at 119 n.58.

- 86. However, A.R.S. § 19-118(B) requires that the circulator must submit his or her "full name, residence address, telephone number and email address" and an affidavit that "all of the information provided *is correct* to the best of my knowledge." (emphasis added).
- 87. "[S]tatutory requirements for statewide initiative measures must be strictly construed and persons using the initiative process must strictly comply with those [] statutory requirement." A.R.S. § 19-102.01(A).
- 88. The 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 6, Section 2, Subsection C that the Secretary may overlook mistakes in a circulator's registration, directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. §§ 19-102.01(A) and 19-118(B).
- 89. If an "EPM provision . . . directly conflicts with the express and mandatory provisions of" a statute, "it exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization and is therefore void." *Ariz. All. for Retired Ams., Inc.*, 537 P.3d at 823–24 ¶ 18; *see also Leibsohn*, 254 Ariz. at 7 ¶ 22 ("[A]n EPM regulation that contradicts statutory requirements does not have the force of law."); Ariz. R. Special Action Proc. 3(b).
- 90. Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that this Court declare the Validity of Circulator Registrations Rule void, and award special action and injunctive relief to enjoin the implementation of the same.

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COUNT V

Duty to Canvass Rules Are Ultra Vires and Conflict with Statute (Special Action, Declaratory, and Injunctive Relief)
(Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 16-642, 16-643, 16-646; Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65)

- 91. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 92. Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection A(2) of the 2023 EPM states that "the Board of Supervisors has a non-discretionary duty to canvass the returns as provided by the County Recorder or other officer in charge of elections and has no authority to change vote totals, reject the election results, or delay certifying results without express statutory authority or court order." Ex. 1 at 248.
- 93. Moreover, Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection B(2) of the 2023 EPM states that "Secretary of State has a non-discretionary duty to canvass the returns" but "[i]f the official canvass of any county has not been received by [the] deadline, the Secretary of State must proceed with the state canvass without including the votes of the missing county." Ex. 1 at 252.
- 94. The canvassing, or the scope of a legislative or executive official's duty to canvass, an election is not a topic that the Secretary is statutorily authorized to include in the EPM. See A.R.S. § 16-452.
- 95. "[A]n EPM regulation that exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization or contravenes an election statute's purpose does not have the force of law." *Leach*, 250 Ariz. at 576 ¶ 20.
- 96. Thus, these provisions of the EPM are outside the statutory delegation and cannot carry the force of law.
- 97. To hold otherwise would empower the Secretary to prescribe entirely new criminal requirements, equivalent to lawmaking. *See* A.R.S. § 16-452(C) (establishing that violations of the EPM constitutes a class 2 misdemeanor); *see also Prentiss*, 163 Ariz. at 85

("The legislature has the exclusive power to declare what the law shall be [and] determines what is a crime . . . ").

- 98. Making matters worse, these provisions conflict with the plain language of Arizona law.
- 99. Arizona law requires the Board to conduct a canvass by a certain deadline. A.R.S. §§ 16-642, 16-646.
- 100. Related to the county board's duty to canvass, while canvass is not defined, the statute does indicate that the duty to canvass empowers the Board to "determin[e] the vote of the county." A.R.S. § 16-643.
- 101. By empowering the Board to "determin[e] the vote," the statute contemplates that there may be circumstances in which the Board is not necessarily required to accept the returns in the form provided by the elections director or vote in a certain way regarding accuracy of returns.
- 102. To be sure, a Board cannot *abuse* its discretion and reject otherwise valid and accurate results, but its duty to canvass does not require it to blindly accept the returns if legitimate concerns are present.
- 103. Thus, the 2023 EPM's direction in Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection A(2) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. §§ 16-642, 16-643, 16-646.
- 104. Related to the Secretary's duty to canvass, A.R.S. § 16-648(C) states that "[i]f the official canvass of any county has not been received on the fourth Monday following the general election, the canvass shall be postponed from day to day, not to exceed thirty days from the date of the election, until canvasses from all counties are received." (emphasis added)
- 105. Because the statute requires both a timely and complete canvass, the 2023 EPM's unilateral instruction in Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsection B(2) that the Secretary can or should proceed without an entire county's votes (and disenfranchise potentially millions of voters) directly conflicts with the plain language of A.R.S. § 16-648(C).

106. If an "EPM provision . . . directly conflicts with the express and mandatory provisions of" a statute, "it exceeds the scope of its statutory authorization and is therefore void." *Ariz. All. for Retired Ams., Inc.*, 537 P.3d at 823–24 ¶ 18; *see also Leibsohn*, 254 Ariz. at 7 ¶ 22 ("[A]n EPM regulation that contradicts statutory requirements does not have the force of law."); Ariz. R. Special Action Proc. 3(b).

107. Accordingly, Plaintiffs request that this Court declare the Duty to Canvass Rules void, and award special action and injunctive relief to enjoin the implementation of the same.

COUNT VI

The Secretary Lacks Authority to Interpret and Codify Preliminary Court Rulings in Pending Cases

(Special Action, Declaratory Relief)

(Ariz. R. Special Action P. 3; A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 16-452)

- 108. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference the foregoing allegations as if fully set forth herein.
- 109. The EPM includes several references to ongoing litigation and interpretations of statutes at issue within those litigations. *See, e.g.*, Ex. 1 at 3 n.5, 6, 12 n.8–9, 14 n.11, 15 n.13–15, 22 n.19–20, 40 n.25–26, 41 n.27, 74 n.40, 83 n.42, 118 n.56, and 119 n.57.
- which judicial rulings to adopt substantively. For example, the EPM incorporates certain non-final and non-injunctive rulings from ongoing legal proceedings, *see*, *e.g.*, Ex. 1 at 3 n.5, 12 n.8–9, 14 n.11, 15 n.13–15, 22 n.19–20, 40 n.25–26, 41 n.27 (rulings in *Mi Familia Vota v. Fontes.*, D. Ariz. docket no. CV-22-00509-PHX-SRB), while rejecting others, *see*, *e.g.*, Ex. 1 at 83 n.42 (not incorporating substantive rulings in *Arizona Free Enterprise Club v. Fontes*, Yavapai County Super. Ct. docket no. S1300CV2023-00202, stating only that "litigation is pending on this issue").
- 111. Interpreting court rulings or the statutes at issue within them is not within the Secretary's statutory scope of authority. *Leach*, 250 Ariz. at 576 \P 20.

- 112. As our supreme court has explained, "it is this Court's role, not the Secretary's, to interpret [the] meaning" of election statutes. *Leibsohn*, 254 Ariz. at 7 ¶ 22.
- 113. Cherry-picking rulings that align with the Secretary's policy preferences makes this action in excess of the Secretary's authority worse.
- 114. Again, anything included in the EPM carries the force of law. *Ariz. Pub. Integrity All.*, 250 Ariz. at 63 ¶ 16; A.R.S. § 16-452(C).
- 115. Although it may be appropriate for the EPM to note the pendency of legal proceedings in order to increase awareness (and, where applicable, to ensure compliance with preliminary injunctions and final injunctions that are not stayed pending appeal), the EPM itself cannot invalidate or amend statutory requirements. Nor can the EPM interfere with or abrogate the appellate rights of other litigants in ongoing legal proceedings.
- 116. Accordingly, to the extent the 2023 EPM purports to override statutory requirements based on non-final rulings in ongoing legal proceedings (which would arguably have the effect of denying other litigants in ongoing proceedings the right to appeal such rulings), the Court should declare that the 2023 EPM's adoption of such rulings to be non-binding unless and until the underlying legal rulings themselves become binding.

DEMAND FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiffs demand relief in the following forms:

A. A declaration under A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 12-1832 and special action relief pursuant to Arizona Rule of Special Action Procedure 3(b) or other applicable law providing that the 2023 EPM's Non-Residency of Juror Questionnaire Rule, Investigations of Citizenship Status Rule, AEVL Effective Date Rule, Validity of Circulator Registrations Rule, and Duty to Canvass Rules, *See* Ex. 1 at Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsections C(1) and C(2)(a), Chapter 2, Section 1, Subsection B(7), Chapter 6, Section 2, Subsection C, Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsections A(2) and B(2): (i) exceed the Secretary's specific statutory authorization and lawful authority because these provisions conflict with specific statutes; (ii) do not carry the force of law; and (iii) are void.

В. A declaration under A.R.S. §§ 12-1831, 12-1832 and special action relief pursuant to Arizona Rule of Special Action Procedure 3(b) or other applicable law providing that, to the extent the 2023 EPM purports to override statutory requirements based on non-final rulings in ongoing legal proceedings, that the 2023 EPM's adoption of such rulings: (i) exceed the Secretary's lawful authority; (ii) do not carry the force of law; and (iii) are non-binding unless and until the underlying legal rulings themselves become binding.

C. A preliminary and permanent injunction pursuant to Ariz. R. Civ. P. 65 or other applicable law prohibiting the Secretary from enforcing or implementing the 2023 EPM's Non-Residency of Juror Questionnaire Rule, Investigations of Citizenship Status Rule, AEVL Effective Date Rule, Validity of Circulator Registrations Rule, and Duty to Canvass Rules, See Ex. 1 at Chapter 1, Section 9, Subsections C(1) and C(2)(a), Chapter 2, Section 1, Subsection B(7), Chapter 6, Section 2, Subsection C, Chapter 13, Section 2, Subsections A(2) and B(2).

D. An award of reasonable attorneys' fees and costs pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 12-341, 12-348.01, 12-1840, 12-2030, the private attorney general doctrine, and other applicable law.

E. Such other relief as the Court deems necessary, equitable, proper, and just.

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1	DATED this day of January, 2024.
2	STATECRAFT PLLC
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4	By Joy For
5	Kory Langhofer Thomas Basile
6	649 North Fourth Avenue, First Floor Phoenix, Arizona 85003
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8	SNELL & WILMER L.L.P.
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VERIFICATION

I, Warren Petersen, certify that I have read the foregoing Verified Complaint and know the contents thereof by personal knowledge. I know the allegations of the Verified Complaint to be true, except the matters therein on information and belief, which I believe to be true.

Executed under penalty of perjury this 31st day of January 2024.

Warren Petersen

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