



Supreme Court

STATE OF ARIZONA

FROM THE CHAMBERS OF
JOHN R LOPEZ IV
VICE CHIEF JUSTICE

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September 14, 2026

Peter Gentala, Esq.
President, Center for Arizona Policy
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Dear Mr. Gentala:

Thank you for your September 10, 2026 email, and the invitation to respond to the Center for Arizona Policy's 2026 Judicial Survey. Although I respectfully decline to answer the questionnaire directly, I appreciate the opportunity to provide information concerning my approach to judicial service.

I will always honor my oath to treat each party in every case with fairness and impartiality. To that end, every decision I render is based solely upon the relevant facts and the applicable law. No more, no less.

I know I have arrived at the correct conclusion in a case when the facts and the law lead me to it. A judge's policy predilections have no place in resolving cases. Many cases before my Court involve close decisions. Partisan or policy preferences are never *a* factor, much less *the* deciding factor. The late Justice Antonin Scalia articulated the point perfectly when he remarked that, "if you're going to be a good and faithful judge, you have to resign yourself to the fact that you're not always going to like the conclusions you reach. If you like them all the time, you're probably doing something wrong." This principle guides my judgment.

My oath of office requires fidelity to the U.S. and Arizona Constitutions. A foundational premise of both documents is the separation of powers. This doctrine compels judicial modesty and restraint. As such, I am tasked with interpreting the text of statutes and constitutional provisions in order to discern and effectuate the meaning of the law as written, and to defer to the law when it comports with constitutional standards. The text is always the starting point and, if unambiguous in context, the appropriate stopping point of interpretation. I am reticent to stray from the text, and other canons of statutory interpretation should never be invoked to override a reasonable textual interpretation.

I often speak on the importance of maintaining the integrity of our nation's institutions. I have

dedicated my professional life to the cause of justice and to maintaining the rule of law. As a judge, I best serve this purpose by deferring to the will of the people when their legislative enactments meet constitutional standards, and by vigorously protecting our citizens' rights when legislative enactments or state actions exceed constitutional parameters. There is no place in our constitutional order for judges to assume the legislative prerogative to resolve policy debates that are best left to the moral judgment of the people.

Over the past ten years, it has been a tremendous honor to serve as a Justice on the Court for which I served as a law clerk. Every decision I have made during my tenure has been the culmination of rigorous analysis, thoughtful deliberation, and a firm conviction that it was the proper judgment under the law. I believe that these decisions reflect my commitment to my oath and the constitutional values I have always striven to honor and preserve.

Sincerely,

/s/ John R. Lopez IV

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