GEN JUSTICE

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Arizona Governor Doug Ducey Signs New Law Limiting Unnecessary Delays in Foster Children's Court Cases

Phoenix, Ariz. – Senate Bill 1079, sponsored by Arizona Sen. Nancy Barto, passed the Arizona legislature unanimously and today was signed into law by Arizona Governor Doug Ducey. This pivotal law puts specific and concrete timeframes into the court cases of Arizona's foster children and limits unnecessary delays and continuances in a child's court case.

Gen Justice Chief Counsel, Rebecca Masterson, the architect of the bill, said "Children in the foster care system cannot afford a halfhearted commitment to their legal rights. Every month a child spends in foster care is another month spent without a permanent home. This bill puts an end to the frequent and unnecessary delays in foster children's court cases, getting kids out of the system and into homes quicker."

Federal law requires children to have stable living situations and permanent homes as soon as possible. But according to the most recent Department of Health and Human Services review, Arizona is not in compliance with this goal, largely due to unnecessary court continuances and delays. This bill addresses this shortcoming head on.

"Arizona has become a national leader in the child welfare arena. This bill gives teeth to court deadlines by prohibiting court continuances over 30 days absent extraordinary circumstances," said Darcy Olsen, Gen Justice Founder and CEO. "The commitment of our lawmakers to this issue is clear and inspiring as the bill passed unanimously in all committee and floor votes."

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About Gen Justice: Gen Justice is an award-winning, nonprofit, charitable organization fighting to mend the broken child protection system and end violence against children through nonpartisan policy initiatives and a pro bono Children's Law Clinic. To learn more about Gen Justice's life-saving work, visit genjustice.org.

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