

1 Sarah R. Gonski (# 032567)
2 PERKINS COIE LLP
3 2901 North Central Avenue, Suite 2000
4 Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2788
5 Telephone: (602) 351-8000
6 Facsimile: (602) 648-7000
7 SGonski@perkinscoie.com

8 Marc E. Elias (WDC# 442007)*
9 Elisabeth C. Frost (WDC# 1007632)*
10 John M. Geise (WDC# 1032700)*
11 PERKINS COIE LLP
12 700 Thirteenth Street NW, Suite 600
13 Washington, D.C. 20005-3960
14 Telephone: (202) 654-6200
15 Facsimile: (202) 654-6211
16 MElias@perkinscoie.com
17 EFrost@perkinscoie.com
18 JGeise@perkinscoie.com

19 Abha Khanna (WA# 42612)*
20 PERKINS COIE LLP
21 1201 Third Avenue, Suite 4900
22 Seattle, WA 98101-3099
23 Telephone: (206) 359-8000
24 Facsimile: (206) 359-9000
25 AKhanna@perkinscoie.com

26 *Motions for Pro Hac Vice Forthcoming

27 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
28 DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

29 Brian Mecinas; C.V., *ex rel.* Carolyn Vasko;
30 DNC Services Corp., d/b/a Democratic
31 National Committee; DSCC; and Priorities
32 USA,

33 Plaintiffs,

34 v.

35 Katie Hobbs, in her official capacity as the
36 Arizona Secretary of State,

37 Defendant.

No. _____

**COMPLAINT FOR
DECLARATORY AND
INJUNCTIVE RELIEF**

1 Plaintiffs Brian Mecinas, C.V., *ex rel.* Carolyn Vasko, DNC Services Corp., d/b/a
2 Democratic National Committee (the “DNC”), DSCC, and Priorities USA, file this
3 Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief against Defendant Katie Hobbs, in her
4 official capacity as the Arizona Secretary of State, and allege as follows:¹

5 NATURE OF THE CASE

6 1. It is now well established that the candidate whose name appears first on a
7 ballot in a contested race receives an electoral benefit *solely* due to her first position.
8 Politicians and parties long strongly suspected as much, but this particular piece of political
9 mythology has been confirmed by academics again and again, persuasively and, in recent
10 years, definitively. The ballot order effect is the result of a well-studied and proven
11 phenomenon known as “position bias.”²

12 2. Multiple federal and state courts that have had the opportunity to consider the
13 question have come to the same conclusion: ballot order matters, and when it is unfairly or
14 arbitrarily assigned, it can raise concerns of constitutional magnitude. *See, e.g., Mann v.*
15 *Powell*, 333 F. Supp. 1261, 1267 (N.D. Ill. 1969), *aff’d* 398 U.S. 955 (1970) (affirming
16 preliminary injunction requiring ballot order be determined by nondiscriminatory means);
17 *McLain v. Meier*, 637 F.2d 1159, 1167 (8th Cir. 1980) (holding unconstitutional statute
18 requiring party of candidate receiving most votes in prior congressional election be listed
19 first); *Sangmeister v. Woodard*, 565 F.2d 460, 468 (7th Cir. 1977) (“This court will not
20 accept a procedure that invariably awards the first position on the ballot to . . . the
21 incumbent’s party.”) (citation omitted); *Graves v. McElderry*, 946 F. Supp. 1569, 1581-82
22 (W.D. Okla. 1996) (finding system always listing one party first unconstitutional); *Netsch*
23 *v. Lewis*, 344 F. Supp. 1280 (N.D. Ill. 1972) (holding statute prescribing ballot order by past
24

25 ¹ This Complaint refers to Brian Mecinas and C.V., *ex rel.* Carolyn Vasko
26 collectively as the “Voter Plaintiffs” and the entity plaintiffs as the “Organizational
Plaintiffs.”

27 ² Other terms for this phenomenon include the “primacy effect,” or, in elections
28 specifically, “ballot order effect” and “candidate name order effect.”

1 electoral success violated equal protection); *Gould v. Grubb*, 14 Cal. 3d 661, 664 (1975)
2 (holding statute always placing incumbents first unconstitutional); *Holtzman v. Power*, 313
3 N.Y.S.2d 904, 908-09 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1970) (holding system requiring incumbent at top of
4 ballot unconstitutional), *aff'd*, 311 N.Y.S.2d 824 (1970).

5 3. The Arizona Supreme Court came to a similar conclusion in *Kautenberger v.*
6 *Jackson*, 85 Ariz. 128, 131, 333 P.2d 293, 295 (1958), when it invalidated a law that
7 concerned the ballot order of candidates in primary elections. Although Arizona rotated the
8 order of candidates on paper ballots in primaries, the law in question established a different
9 rule for machine ballots—on those types of ballots, candidates were to be listed in
10 alphabetical order. In finding the law violated the State Constitution, the Arizona Supreme
11 Court found that the randomization of candidate order was necessary due to the “well-
12 known fact” that, “where there are a number of candidates for the same office, the names
13 appearing at the head of the list have a distinct advantage,” and without name rotation,
14 candidates whose names are never listed first are “disadvantage[d].” *Id.* at 131.

15 4. To this day, Arizona law still requires that, in primary elections, candidate’s
16 names must be rotated on a precinct-by-precinct basis. *See* A.R.S. § 16-464 (2018) (names
17 of candidates shall be rotated so that “the name of each candidate shall appear substantially
18 an equal number of times at the top, at the bottom” of ballots across the jurisdiction).
19 Arizona does not, however, apply the same rule to ensure fairness in the State’s general
20 elections.

21 5. Instead, Arizona law mandates that *all* of the ballots in any given county *must*
22 list first, in every partisan election, *only* those candidates who affiliate with a single party.
23 Specifically, A.R.S. § 16-502(E) (2018) (the “Ballot Order Statute”), requires that all
24 candidates who belong to the same political party as the gubernatorial candidate who won
25 the most votes in that county during the last general election (the “favored party”) must be
26 listed first *for every race* on that county’s general election ballots.³

27
28 ³ Candidates are listed “in descending order according to the votes cast for governor

1 6. Remarkably, even in the midst of this inequitable general election system,
2 Arizona appears to recognize the value of name rotation by providing for equal rotation
3 among candidates who belong to the same political party. A.R.S. § 16-502(H). Arizona law
4 thus acknowledges and accounts for the effects of position bias whenever partisanship is
5 not involved, seeking fairness in candidate ordering through rotation in primary elections
6 and between candidates of the same political party.

7 7. Yet, the order of candidates from similarly situated but different political
8 parties who are running against each other in the general election is *never* rotated on a single
9 ballot within a county. Instead, the Ballot Order Statute mandates that every single ballot
10 list the candidates from the favored party first. The disfavored party—even if similarly (or,
11 for all meaningful purposes, identically) situated—has no opportunity for any of its
12 candidates to be listed first on even a single ballot within the county. There are no
13 exceptions.

14 8. Thus, because Republican Doug Ducey won the majority of Maricopa
15 County’s votes for Governor during the 2018 election, the Ballot Order Statute requires that
16 Republican candidates must be listed first (and before their Democratic opponents) in each
17 and every race on every single ballot voted by every voter in the County through at least
18 2022. Yet, because of A.R.S. § 16-502(H), if there is more than one Republican candidate

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20

21 for that county in the most recent election for the office of governor.” A.R.S. § 16-502(E).
22 The remaining portions of A.R.S. § 16-502(E), which are not challenged here, mandate that,
23 “[i]n the case of political parties that did not have candidates on the ballot in the last general
24 election, such parties shall be listed in alphabetical order below the parties that did have
25 candidates on the ballot in the last general election,” followed by independent candidates.
26 The U.S. Supreme Court has recognized that differential treatment of major and minor party
27 candidates is constitutionally appropriate. *See Timmons v. Twin Cities Area New Party*, 520
28 U.S. 351, 367 (1997) (allowing states to “enact reasonable election regulations that may, in
practice, favor the traditional two-party system”). It has not done the same for similarly
situated major parties. In fact, courts have repeatedly stricken ballot order systems that
prioritize one similarly situated major party over another. *See Graves*, 946 F. Supp. at 1580-
81; *McLain*, 637 F.2d 1159, 1166.

1 running for a given office, *their* names *will* be rotated equitably on ballots within the County
2 so that each gets first billing on ballots in roughly the same number of precincts.

3 9. Although theoretically the Ballot Order Statute's county-specific application
4 could mean that the benefits of the first position are distributed equitably among the major
5 party candidates, that is not, and has never been, the case. Arizona's population is not
6 equitably divided among its counties—not even close. Nor have election results varied
7 significantly enough from county to county in past gubernatorial races to result in even a
8 rough equalization in distribution.

9 10. In 2020, the Ballot Order Statute will operate in Arizona to the almost
10 exclusive benefit of Republican candidates. Applying the results of the 2018 gubernatorial
11 election, the Statute will require that, on every general election ballot in *all but four* of
12 Arizona's 15 counties, voters will be presented with ballots that list Republican candidates
13 first in every single partisan race. Those counties are home to over 80% of Arizona's total
14 population.

15 11. As a result, Republican candidates will have a significant, state-mandated
16 advantage, up and down the slate of partisan races, which in 2020 will include a highly
17 competitive race for U.S. Senate, all of Arizona's nine congressional districts, and the entire
18 State Senate and House of Representatives. In the U.S. congressional races, voters in six of
19 Arizona's nine districts will see only Republican candidates listed first; the same is true for
20 voters in 21 of Arizona's 30 state legislative districts.

21 12. The heavy favoring of the Republican Party that the Ballot Order Statute will
22 mandate in 2020 is far from an anomaly. To reach this conclusion, one need look no further
23 than the case of Maricopa County, which alone is home to nearly two-thirds of Arizona's
24 total population. With the exceptions of 1982 and 2006, a Republican candidate has
25 received a majority of the vote in the governor's race in Maricopa County for the last several
26 decades. The Ballot Order Statute has thus ensured that the majority of Arizona's populace
27 has consistently received general election ballots with Republican candidates appearing first
28 on all partisan races. In the nearly 40 years that the Statute has been in place, the median

1 elector year has seen 70 percent of the state's population receive a ballot with one party's
2 candidates in the top position. For 31 of those years, the party to receive that benefit has
3 been the Republican Party.

4 13. Plaintiffs in this case include two individual Arizona voters who have
5 supported and plan to continue to support Democrats for public office in Arizona, in 2020
6 and beyond; the DNC, the official national party committee for the Democratic Party, which
7 supports the election of Democrats up and down the ticket across the country, including in
8 Arizona; the DSCC, a political committee whose central mission is to support Democratic
9 candidates to the U.S. Senate, including the Arizona Senate seat up for election in 2020;
10 and Priorities USA, a voter-centric progressive advocacy and service organization whose
11 mission is to build a permanent infrastructure to engage Americans in the progressive
12 movement, including specifically in Arizona. Each of these Plaintiffs has been and will
13 continue to be severely injured as a direct result of the Ballot Order Statute which, election
14 after election, has overwhelmingly favored the Republican Party and, absent an order from
15 this Court, is guaranteed to do so again in 2020.

16 14. At its most basic, the Ballot Order Statute injures Plaintiffs and the candidates
17 they support, as well as the voters who affiliate with them, by treating them differently from
18 the similarly-situated Republican Party and its candidates, solely because a Republican
19 candidate won the most votes for Governor in their respective county—in an entirely
20 unrelated election. The Ballot Order Statute also dilutes the vote of Arizonans including the
21 Voter Plaintiffs, each of whom consistently supports Democratic candidates in Arizona
22 elections and all of whose votes must compete with the overwhelming majority of
23 Arizonans who vote in counties where the favored party is the Republican Party. The
24 resulting disparate treatment and burden on Plaintiffs' right to vote are not justified by any
25 legitimate, much less compelling, state interest.

26 15. Simply put, the Ballot Order Statute offends the First and Fourteenth
27 Amendments to the U.S. Constitution because it confers an unfair political advantage on
28 candidates solely because of their partisan affiliation and the fact that a different candidate,

1 also affiliated with their party, won the majority of votes in a specific county in an unrelated,
2 previous election. The advantage of appearing first on a ballot is statistically significant and
3 its persistent accrual to the statutorily-favored party undermines the integrity of Arizona's
4 elections. The Court should accordingly declare the Statute invalid, enjoin its operation, and
5 require Arizona to use a ballot order system that gives similarly situated major-party
6 candidates an equal opportunity to be listed first on the ballot. *See Mann*, 333 F. Supp. 1261,
7 *aff'd* 398 U.S. 955.

8 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

9 16. Plaintiffs bring this action under 42 U.S.C. §§ 1983 and 1988 to redress the
10 deprivation under color of state law of rights secured by the United States Constitution.

11 17. This Court has original jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action
12 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343, because the matters in controversy arise under the
13 Constitution and laws of the United States.

14 18. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendant, the Secretary of
15 State, who is sued in her official capacity only.

16 19. Venue is proper in the Phoenix Division of the U.S. District Court in the
17 District of Arizona pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because, *inter alia*, the Defendant
18 Secretary of State resides in this judicial district, and a substantial part of the events that
19 gave rise to Plaintiffs' claims occurred there.

20 20. This Court has the authority to enter a declaratory judgment pursuant to 28
21 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

22 **PARTIES**

23 21. Plaintiff Brian Mecinas is a resident of the State of Arizona. He has been a
24 resident of Arizona and of Maricopa County for the past 12 years, and is a freshman at
25 Arizona State University. Mr. Mecinas turned 18 years old on May 31, 2019 and has already
26 registered to vote. Mr. Mecinas considers himself to be a member of the Democratic Party.
27 He regularly supports Democratic candidates in Arizona elections and intends to vote for
28 Democratic Party candidates in the upcoming November 2020 general election. If the Court

1 does not enjoin the Ballot Order Statute prior to then, Republican Party candidates will be
2 listed in the first position on the ballot in all partisan races in which he will be voting, and
3 they will continue to receive an artificial and unfair advantage purely as a result of their
4 ballot position. As a result, Mr. Mecinas will suffer serious, irreparable injury because of
5 the Ballot Order Statute, both due to the dilution of his vote and the burden on his efforts to
6 help elect Democratic Party candidates. His vote for Democratic Party candidates will be
7 diluted relative to that of voters who cast their ballots for Republican Party candidates,
8 because its weight and impact will be decreased—and the weight and impact of votes cast
9 for Republican candidates increased—by the votes accruing to Republican candidates
10 solely due to their first position on the ballot. Mr. Mecinas has also been actively engaged
11 in efforts to help elect Democratic Party candidates in Maricopa County, including by
12 interning for a Democratic candidate’s congressional campaign—efforts which the Ballot
13 Order Statute makes significantly more difficult. He plans to continue these activities in
14 regard to the upcoming 2020 election. The Ballot Order Statute, if it is not enjoined, will
15 burden Mr. Mecinas’s ability to engage in effective efforts to elect Democratic Party
16 candidates by requiring substantially more time and resources to achieve his mission.

17 22. Plaintiff C.V., *ex rel.* Carolyn Vasko, is a resident of the State of Arizona. She
18 has been a resident of Glendale for the past 17 years. C.V. will turn 18 years old on January
19 11, 2020 and plans to register to vote in time to vote in the upcoming 2020 election. C.V.
20 considers herself to be a member of the Democratic Party. She regularly supports
21 Democratic candidates in Arizona elections and intends to vote for Democratic Party
22 candidates in the upcoming November 2020 general election. If the Court does not enjoin
23 the Ballot Order Statute prior to then, Republican Party candidates will be listed in the first
24 position on the ballot in all partisan races in which she will be voting, and they will continue
25 to receive an artificial and unfair advantage purely as a result of their ballot position. As a
26 result, C.V. will suffer serious, irreparable injury because of the Ballot Order Statute, both
27 due to the dilution of her vote and the burden on her efforts to help elect Democratic Party
28 candidates. Her vote for Democratic Party candidates will be diluted relative to that of

1 voters who cast their ballots for Republican Party candidates, because its weight and impact
2 will be decreased—and the weight and impact of votes cast for Republican candidates
3 increased—by the votes accruing to Republican candidates solely due to their first position
4 on the ballot. C.V. has also been actively engaged in efforts to help elect Democratic Party
5 candidates in Maricopa County, including during her mother’s 2014 candidacy for the
6 Arizona State Legislature—efforts which the Ballot Order Statute makes significantly more
7 difficult. She plans to continue these activities in regard to the upcoming 2020 election. The
8 Ballot Order Statute, if it is not enjoined, will burden C.V.’s ability to engage in effective
9 efforts to elect Democratic Party candidates by requiring substantially more time and
10 resources to achieve her mission.

11 23. Plaintiff DNC is the national committee of the Democratic Party as defined
12 by 52 U.S.C. § 30101(14). Its mission is to elect local, state, and national candidates of the
13 Democratic Party to public office throughout the United States, including in Arizona. The
14 DNC works to accomplish that mission by, among other things, working closely with
15 Democratic candidates and assisting state parties by making expenditures on candidates’
16 behalves, providing Get Out the Vote (“GOTV”) assistance, and actively supporting the
17 development of programs benefiting Democratic Party candidates. The DNC has previously
18 engaged in, and plans to continue to engage in, expenditures on behalf of Democratic Party
19 candidates, GOTV assistance, and the development of programs to elect Democratic Party
20 candidates in Arizona. The DNC has members and constituents across the United States,
21 including in Arizona, where the DNC’s members and constituents include Democratic Party
22 candidates, elected officials, and voters. The Ballot Order Statute directly harms the DNC
23 by frustrating its mission and efforts to elect Democratic Party candidates in Arizona by
24 giving an unfair, arbitrary, and artificial electoral advantage to Republican Party candidates
25 in counties that house an overwhelming percentage of Arizona’s population. The DNC has
26 had to and will have to expend and divert funds that otherwise would have supported GOTV
27 and other mission-critical efforts in order to combat the effects of the Ballot Order Statute
28 to assist in getting Democratic candidates elected in Arizona, including specifically in

1 anticipation of the 2020 general election. The Ballot Order Statute further harms the DNC
2 because it treats the DNC's candidate members in Arizona differently than similarly
3 situated Republican Party candidates in partisan elections by mandating that all Republican
4 candidates must be listed first on the ballot in the vast majority of Arizona's counties, for
5 no other reason than a Republican garnered the most votes in the last gubernatorial election
6 in that county. As a result, unless the Ballot Order Statute is enjoined, Republican
7 candidates will enjoy a significant, state-mandated advantage in 2020 (and beyond). The
8 DNC's voter members and its constituency of Democratic voters also have suffered and
9 will continue to suffer serious, irreparable injury as a result of the Ballot Order Statute,
10 because their votes for Democratic Party candidates have been and will continue to be
11 diluted by operation of the Ballot Order Statute.

12 24. Plaintiff DSCC is the national senatorial committee of the Democratic Party
13 as defined by 52 U.S.C. § 30101(14). Its mission is to elect candidates of the Democratic
14 Party to the U.S. Senate, including in and from Arizona. The DSCC works to accomplish
15 its mission by, among other things, making expenditures for and contributions to
16 Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate and assisting state parties throughout the country,
17 including in Arizona. In 2018, the DSCC made contributions and expenditures in the tens
18 of millions of dollars to persuade and mobilize voters to support Democratic Senate
19 candidates. In 2020, there will be a Senate election in Arizona, and the DSCC will work to
20 elect the Democratic candidate. As a result, the DSCC again intends to make substantial
21 contributions and expenditures to support the Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate in
22 Arizona in 2020. The Ballot Order Statute directly harms the DSCC by frustrating its
23 mission, giving an unfair, arbitrary, and artificial electoral advantage to Republican Party
24 candidates, including in elections for U.S. Senate. Most immediately, the DSCC will have
25 to expend and divert additional funds and resources on GOTV, voter persuasion efforts, and
26 other activities in Arizona, at the expense of its efforts in other states, to combat the effects
27 of the Ballot Order Statute in the 2020 general elections for U.S. Senate in Arizona.
28

1 candidate whose name appears first on a ballot” and this phenomenon is “so widespread
2 and so universally accepted as to make it almost a matter of public knowledge”); Nuri Kim
3 et al., *Moderators of Candidate Name-Order Effects in Elections: An Experiment*, 36
4 *Political Psychology* 525, 526 (2015) (“The body of research on name-order effects
5 indicates that candidates often received more votes when their names were listed first than
6 when their names were listed after the names of one or more candidates with whom they
7 competed.”); Josh Pasek et al., *Prevalence and Moderators of the Candidate Name-Order*
8 *Effect*, 78 *Public Opinion Quarterly* 416, 417 (2014) (“Most studies reported evidence of
9 primacy effects, whereby candidates received more votes when listed first than when listed
10 later.”); *see also McLain*, 637 F.2d at 1166 (affirming “finding of ballot advantage in the
11 first position”); *Sangmeister*, 565 F.2d at 468 (“[T]he trial court’s conclusion that ‘top
12 placement on the ballot would be an advantage to the plaintiff’ is supported by substantial
13 evidence[.]”); *Graves v. McElderry*, 946 F. Supp. 1569, 1576 (W.D. Okla. 1996) (finding
14 “some measure of position bias exists in Oklahoma’s” elections); *Akins v. Sec’y of State*,
15 154 N.H. 67, 71 (N.H. 2006) (affirming finding that “the primacy effect confers an
16 advantage in elections”); *Gould*, 14 Cal. 3d at 664 (describing finding of position bias as
17 “consistent with parallel findings rendered in similar litigation throughout the country”);
18 *State ex rel. Roof v. Bd. of Comm’rs*, 39 Ohio St. 2d 130, 136 (Ohio 1974) (recognizing “it
19 is generally agreed” that “candidates whose names appear at the beginning of the list receive
20 some votes attributable solely to the positioning of their names”).

21 28. The Arizona Supreme Court has similarly long recognized that ballot ordering
22 schemes raise equal protection concerns because of position bias. In 1958—long before
23 contemporary social science research enabled statistical confirmation of what had been
24 suspected and largely accepted—the Court recognized that, “where there are a number of
25 candidates for the same office, the names appearing at the head of the list have a distinct
26 advantage.” *Kautenberger*, 85 Ariz. at 131. For that very reason, that Court held that the
27 State Constitution’s equal protection clause did not allow candidate’s names to be placed
28

1 “in alphabetical order according to the first letter of the surnames of the candidates,” during
2 certain primary elections. *Id.* at 129.⁴

3 29. The challenger in *Kautenberger* was a primary candidate whose last name
4 came near the middle of the alphabet, meaning that, if the law was upheld, “his name would
5 never appear first on the machine ballot.” *Id.* at 130. He argued that “places him at a
6 disadvantage with the voting public,” likely “decreas[ing] the number of votes which would
7 otherwise be cast for him, . . . amount[ing] to discrimination and creat[ing] privileges for
8 other candidates which he was denied.” *Id.* The Court agreed and invalidated the law. *See*
9 *generally id.*

10 30. Notwithstanding *Kautenberger*, Arizona’s present-day Ballot Order Statute
11 mandates that candidates appear in a specific order according to their partisan affiliation:

12 The lists of the candidates of the several parties shall be arranged with
13 the names of the parties in descending order according to the votes cast
14 for governor for that county in the most recent general election for the
15 office of governor, commencing with the left-hand column. In the case
16 of political parties that did not have candidates on the ballot in the last
17 general election, such parties shall be listed in alphabetical order below
18 the parties that did have candidates on the ballot in the last general
19 election. The names of all candidates nominated under § 16-341 shall
20 be placed in a single column below that of the recognized parties.

21 A.R.S. § 16-502(E).

22 31. Thus, the Ballot Order Statute, on its face, treats similarly situated political
23 parties differently, automatically granting the advantageous first position on every single
24 ballot for every single partisan race in each county to candidates who affiliate with the same
25 political party as the candidate who won the most votes in that county during the last
26 gubernatorial election.

27 ⁴ Although the *Kautenberger* court referred to the relevant state constitutional
28 provision as the “privileges and immunities clause,” the clause has been long recognized as
the State’s correlative of the federal Equal Protection Clause and is also referred to
frequently as Arizona’s “equal protection clause.” *See, e.g., Kenyon v. Hammer*, 142 Ariz.
69, 77, 688 P.2d 961, 969 (1984) (en banc).

1 32. Candidates who affiliate with the favored party thus enjoy an artificial,
2 arbitrary, and unfair electoral advantage based solely on the performance of a different
3 candidate who affiliated with their party in an entirely different election that occurred years
4 earlier.

5 33. This mandated and perpetual preference to the candidates who affiliate with
6 the favored party in Arizona's general elections stands in stark contrast to the ballot order
7 system that the State employs in other contexts.

8 34. In primary elections, Arizona rotates the names of candidates on a precinct-
9 by-precinct basis. The result is that each candidate's name appears in the top position on a
10 roughly equal number of ballots. *See* A.R.S. § 16-464 (2018).

11 35. Even in the general elections, a different provision of the Ballot Order Statute
12 appears to implicitly recognize that position bias plays a role, because it mandates that
13 candidates who belong to the same political party must be rotated so that each such
14 candidate may be listed first among their partisan fellows on an equal basis. *See* A.R.S. §
15 16-502(H).

16 36. As a direct result of the Ballot Order Statute, position bias has severely injured
17 and, unless enjoined, will continue to injure Plaintiffs in Arizona elections.

18 37. This harm will be particularly felt in 2020, when Arizona is projected to have
19 numerous highly competitive races.

20 38. As of the date of this filing, the Cook Political Report has three congressional
21 races in Arizona on its list of competitive races (Congressional District 1, Congressional
22 District 2, and Congressional District 6).

23 39. The *Washington Post* has identified Senator McSally's seat as competitive
24 and among the ten Senate seats most likely to flip in 2020, ranking it the third most likely
25 to change hands from Republican to Democratic.

26 40. At the state level, Republicans currently have only a two-seat majority in the
27 Arizona State House, the closest divide since 1966, opening up the very real prospect that
28 majority control of the Arizona State House will be up for grabs in the 2020 election.

1 41. Unless the Ballot Order Statute is enjoined, Republican candidates will enter
2 the 2020 election with a state-mandated thumb on the scale in their favor, because over 80%
3 of Arizona’s voters will be presented with ballots in which the names of Republican
4 candidates are listed first for every single partisan race. This is so for no other reason than
5 that a *different* Republican candidate won the majority of that county’s votes for a *different*
6 office during a *different* election year.

7 42. The result will be severe and irreparable harm to the Plaintiffs, the candidates
8 they support, and the voters who support them.

9 43. Neither political favoritism of one political party and its voters, nor purported
10 election administration concerns, can sustain the Ballot Order Statute against legal
11 challenge. *See Dunn v. Blumstein*, 405 U.S. 330, 351 (1972) (“States may not casually
12 deprive a class of individuals of the vote because of some remote administrative benefit to
13 the State.”); *see also Graves*, 946 F. Supp. at 1580 (finding no legitimate state interest in
14 always placing one major political party first on the ballot).

15 44. Nor can the state justify its arbitrary and unfair treatment of similarly situated
16 major political parties, their candidates, and voters over the other by a claim of
17 administrative necessity.

18 45. As discussed, Arizona already mandates name rotation during primary races
19 and amongst partisan equals in general elections. Those systems were put in place precisely
20 because of the concern that to do otherwise “would result [in] disadvantage to some
21 candidates.” *Kautenberger*, 85 Ariz. at 131. Implementing a similar rotational system in the
22 general election would alleviate the burdens imposed by the Ballot Order Statute, as well
23 as the arbitrary differential treatment that it presently mandates.

24 46. This has been the conclusion of several courts that have considered challenges
25 to similarly flawed ballot order statutes. *See, e.g., McLain*, 637 F.2d at 1169 (“[T]he fairest
26 remedy for a constitutionally defective placement of candidates would appear to be some
27 form of ballot rotation whereby ‘first position’ votes are shared equitably by all candidates,”
28 and “[o]ur preliminary research suggests that the most effective rotation system is one

1 which rotates names from one ballot to the next.”); *Gould*, 14 Cal. 3d at 676 (stating “a
2 number of state courts have specifically ordered election officials to implement a ballot
3 rotation method, thereby largely eliminating the potential distorting effect of positional
4 preference”).

5 47. Even if applying Arizona’s already-existing rotational scheme for candidates
6 of the same party to candidates of similarly situated parties would impose some minimal
7 administrative burden, that burden cannot justify the disparate treatment that the current
8 Ballot Order Statute mandates or outweigh the burden on the rights of political parties,
9 candidates, and the voters who support them. *See, e.g., Mann*, 333 F. Supp. at 1261; *Meier*,
10 637 F.2d at 1166; *Sangmeister*, 565 F.2d at 468; *Graves*, 946 F. Supp. at 1580; *Netsch*, 344
11 F. Supp. at 1280; *Gould*, 14 Cal. 3d at 664; *Holtzman*, 313 N.Y.S.2d at 909.

12 CLAIMS FOR RELIEF

13 COUNT I

14 **First and Fourteenth Amendments**

15 **U.S. Const. Amend. I and XIV, 42 U.S.C. § 1983, 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201, 2202**

16 **Undue Burden on the Right to Vote**

17 48. Plaintiffs reallege and incorporate by reference all previous paragraphs, as
18 though fully set forth herein.

19 49. A court considering a challenge to a state election law must carefully balance
20 the character and magnitude of injury to the First and Fourteenth Amendment rights that
21 the plaintiff seeks to vindicate against the justifications put forward by the State for the
22 burdens imposed by the rule. *See Burdick v. Takushi*, 504 U.S. 428, 434 (1992); *Anderson*
23 *v. Celebrezze*, 460 U.S. 780, 789 (1983).

24 50. This is a “flexible” sliding scale, where the rigorousness of scrutiny depends
25 upon the extent to which the challenged law burdens voting rights. *Pub. Integrity All., Inc.*
26 *v. City of Tucson*, 836 F.3d 1019, 1024 (9th Cir. 2016); *see also Akins*, 154 N.H. at 67
27 (applying *Anderson-Burdick* and holding that strict scrutiny was correct test to determine
28 constitutionality of ballot order system that prioritized candidate names alphabetically).

1 51. Courts need not accept a state’s justifications at face value, particularly where
2 they are “speculative,” otherwise it “would convert *Anderson-Burdick*’s means-end fit
3 framework into ordinary rational-basis review wherever the burden a challenged regulation
4 imposes is less than severe.” *Soltysik v. Padilla*, 910 F.3d 438, 448–49 (9th Cir. 2018)
5 (citing *Pub. Integrity All., Inc. v. City of Tucson*, 836 F.3d 1019, 1024-25 (9th Cir. 2016));
6 *see also Crawford Marion Cty. Election Bd.*, 553 U.S. 181, 191 (2008) (Stevens, J.,
7 controlling op.) (“However slight th[e] burden may appear, . . . it must be justified by
8 relevant and legitimate state interests *sufficiently weighty to justify the limitation.*”) (quotation marks omitted) (emphasis added).

9
10 52. The Ballot Order Statute, which provides an unfair, arbitrary, and artificial
11 advantage to all candidates whose political party received the most votes in each county in
12 the last gubernatorial election, burdens the right to vote of those voters—including the Voter
13 Plaintiffs and the members and constituencies of the Organizational Plaintiffs—who
14 support candidates who affiliate with the non-favored party in each county, by diluting their
15 vote relative to the votes for candidates who associate with the similarly situated, but
16 statutorily-favored party. *See McLain*, 637 F.2d at 1163 (describing system of listing first
17 candidates of party that received the most votes in last North Dakota congressional election
18 as “burden[ing] the fundamental right to vote possessed by supporters of the last-listed
19 candidates, in violation of the fourteenth amendment”); *see also Gould*, 14 Cal. 3d at 670
20 (describing statute that prioritized ballot order by incumbency as “inevitably dilut[ing] the
21 weight of the vote of all those electors who cast their ballots for a candidate who is not
22 included within the favored class”).

23 53. The weight and impact of the Voter Plaintiffs’ votes (as well as the
24 Organizational Plaintiffs’ membership and constituencies) are consistently decreased—and
25 the weight and impact of the votes for the candidates who associate with the favored party,
26 increased—by the votes accruing to the first-listed candidates solely due to their first
27 position on the ballot as a result of the Ballot Order Statute.

28

1 *see also* *Bush v. Gore*, 531 U.S. 98, 104-05 (2000) (holding Equal Protection Clause applies
2 to “the manner of [the] exercise [of voting]” and “once granted the right to vote on equal
3 terms, the State may not, by later arbitrary and disparate treatment, value one person’s vote
4 over that of another”).

5 60. The Ballot Order Statute treats otherwise similarly situated major-party
6 candidates differently. In doing so, it grants a consistent, unfair, and arbitrary electoral
7 advantage to one party based solely on the county-level performance of that party’s
8 candidate in the last gubernatorial election. This preferential treatment consistently and
9 meaningfully disadvantages Plaintiffs and the candidates, members, constituencies, voters,
10 and organizations who support them, in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the
11 Fourteenth Amendment. *See McLain*, 637 F.2d at 1166 (holding statute requiring political
12 party of the candidate who received the most votes in prior North Dakota congressional
13 election to be listed first on ballots unconstitutional, in violation of the Fourteenth
14 Amendment’s Equal Protection Clause); *see also Mann*, 333 F. Supp. at 1267 (enjoining
15 ballot order system of placing candidates at top of ballot based on prior electoral success—
16 due to “seniority” or “incumbency”—and stating that “[t]he Fourteenth Amendment
17 requires all candidates, newcomers and incumbents alike, to be treated equally”), *aff’d by*
18 398 U.S. 955 (1970); *Netsch*, 344 F. Supp. at 1281 (holding statute prescribing ballot order
19 by past electoral success violated Fourteenth Amendment because it denied “the right to
20 equal protection”); *Holtzman*, 62 Misc. 2d at 1024 (holding system requiring placement of
21 incumbent at top of ballot unconstitutional because it violated Equal Protection Clause); *see*
22 *also Sangmeister*, 565 F.2d at 468 (“This court will not accept a procedure that invariably
23 awards the first position on the ballot to . . . the incumbent’s party.”) (citation omitted).

24 61. The Ballot Order Statute does not further any legitimate state interest, much
25 less a compelling state interest, that is sufficiently weighty to justify its favoritism and the
26 serious and irreparable injury that results to the Plaintiffs because of that favoritism. *See,*
27 *e.g., McLain*, 637 F.2d at 1167 (holding state’s asserted interest in “making the ballot as
28 convenient and intelligible as possible for the great majority of voters” did not justify a

1 ballot order statute listing first on the ballot the candidates of the political party that won
2 the last congressional race); *Holtzman*, 62 Misc. 2d at 1024 (holding no rational basis for
3 “such favoritism to a candidate merely on the basis of his having been successful at a prior
4 election” in terms of ballot order).

5 62. Injunctive and declaratory relief is needed to resolve this existing dispute,
6 which presents an actual controversy between the Secretary of State and Plaintiffs, who
7 have adverse legal interests, because the Ballot Order Statute subjects Plaintiffs to serious,
8 concrete, and irreparable injuries due to disparate treatment in violation of the Equal
9 Protection Clause, including, most immediately, in the upcoming 2020 general election.

10 **WHEREFORE**, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court enter judgment:

- 11 (a) declaring, under the authority granted to this Court by 28 U.S.C. § 2201, that
12 the Ballot Order Statute violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the
13 U.S. Constitution;
- 14 (b) preliminarily and permanently enjoining the Secretary of State, her respective
15 agents, officers, employees, and successors, and all persons acting in concert
16 with each or any of them, from implementing, enforcing, or giving any effect
17 to the Ballot Order Statute under the authority granted to this Court by Federal
18 Rule of Civil Procedure 65(a) and 28 U.S.C. § 2202;
- 19 (c) awarding Plaintiffs their costs, disbursements, and reasonable attorneys’ fees
20 incurred in bringing this action pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1988 and other
21 applicable laws; and
- 22 (d) granting such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper,
23 including requiring the Secretary of State to use a ballot order system that
24 gives similarly situated major-party candidates an equal opportunity to be
25 listed first on the ballot.

1 Dated: November 1, 2019

/s Sarah R. Gonski

Sarah R. Gonski (# 032567)
PERKINS COIE LLP
2901 North Central Avenue, Suite 2000
Phoenix, Arizona 85012-2788
Telephone: (602) 351-8000
Facsimile: (602) 648-7000
SGonski@perkinscoie.com

Marc E. Elias (WDC# 442007)*
Elisabeth C. Frost (WDC# 1007632)*
John M. Geise (WDC# 1032700)*
PERKINS COIE LLP
700 Thirteenth Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20005-3960
Telephone: (202) 654-6200
Facsimile: (202) 654-6211
MElias@perkinscoie.com
EFrost@perkinscoie.com
JGeise@perkinscoie.com

Abha Khanna (WA# 42612)*
PERKINS COIE LLP
1201 Third Avenue, Suite 4900
Seattle, WA 98101-3099
Telephone: (206) 359-8000
Facsimile: (206) 359-9000
AKhanna@perkinscoie.com

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on November 1, 2019, I electronically transmitted the attached document to the Clerk’s Office using the ECF System for filing and transmittal of a Notice of Electronic Filing to the ECF registrants.

/s Daniel R. Graziano