



COURT'S FULL STATEMENT

Statement from Raymond L. Billotte

Judicial Branch Administrator & Jury Commissioner • Aug. 12, 2026

Thank you for providing the Court with your questions and for notifying us in advance about ABC15's proposed activity outside the South Court Tower.

First, so there is no confusion, the Superior Court in Maricopa County does not conduct criminal-background investigations of prospective jurors. **Your questions and reporting do, however, raise important issues regarding juror privacy** and the use of information about prospective jurors.

Jurors matter to us, and we take their privacy seriously. Our Court could not fulfill its responsibility to provide fair and impartial justice without citizens willing to serve as jurors. Our responsibility to select a fair and impartial jury also requires us to ask prospective jurors questions about their backgrounds, experiences, qualifications, and ability to serve. Jurors are required to answer those questions honestly, including questions concerning whether they are legally eligible to serve, and the Court relies upon those answers.

Courts have long balanced the privacy of citizens summoned for jury service with the need to obtain information necessary to select a fair and impartial jury. The questions raised by research concerning prospective jurors are not new. Courts and lawyers across the country have addressed these issues for decades, and the American Bar Association has provided guidance concerning prosecutors' pretrial investigation of prospective jurors. Technology and increased access to information have made these issues more complex.

Some of the legal questions raised by these practices may ultimately come before a judge in a pending or future case. Whether a particular investigative practice is lawful or appropriate, and what consequence, if any, should follow, are questions judges must decide based on the facts before them, the arguments of the parties, and the law. **Court leadership cannot prejudge those issues.**

Separate from those legal questions, citizens summoned for jury service should have confidence in the jury process and in how information about them is handled. **Court leadership has been reviewing our jury procedures and will continue to consider whether those procedures appropriately protect juror privacy,** the rights of the parties, and the integrity of jury selection as technology and access to information continue to evolve.

With respect to ABC15's proposed activity outside the courthouse, the Court **recognizes and respects the First Amendment rights of journalists and members of the public.** Judges also have an independent constitutional responsibility to protect the integrity of trials and the ability of prospective and sitting jurors to remain fair and impartial. If outside information raises an issue in a particular case, the judge assigned to that case will address it as appropriate. The Judicial Branch **will not provide an advisory legal opinion** about ABC15's proposed activity.

Our responsibility is to protect fair and impartial trials, the rights of the parties, the integrity of jury service, the privacy and dignity of the citizens we ask to serve, and the constitutional freedoms that surround our judicial system. Each of those responsibilities matter.

Source: Written statement provided by the Judicial Branch of Arizona in Maricopa County to ABC15 on Aug. 12, 2026.