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Filing ID 19941693 Jonathan Riches (025712) 1 Scott Day Freeman (019784) Adam Shelton (038252) 2 Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation at the **GOLDWATER INSTITUTE** 3 500 East Coronado Road Phoenix, Arizona 85004 4 (602) 462-5000 litigation@goldwaterinstitute.org 5 Attorneys for Plaintiffs 6 7 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF MARICOPA 8 ROBERT MARC STAMPER; and 9 GRETCHEN JACOBS dba AZ DESIGN Case No. **CV2025-018956** GROUP, a sole proprietorship, 10 VERIFIED COMPLAINT Plaintiffs, SEEKING DECLARATORY AND 11 INJUNCTIVE RELIEF VS. 12 CITY OF SCOTTSDALE; MAYOR LISA 13 BOROWSKY, VICE MAYOR JAN DUBAUSKAS, COUNCILMEMBER 14 BARRY GRAHAM, COUNCILMEMBER ADAM KWASMAN, COUNCILMEMBER 15 MARYANN McALLEN, COUNCILMEMBER SOLANGE 16 WHITEHEAD, and COUNCILMEMBER KATHY LITTLEFIELD, each in their 17 official capacities; SONIA ANDREWS, in her official capacity as Scottsdale City 18 Treasurer; GREG CATON, in his official capacity as Scottsdale City Manager; 19 ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF ŘEVENUE; and ROBERT WOODS, in his capacity as 20 Director of the Arizona Department of Revenue, 21 Defendants. 22 23 24 For their Verified Complaint, Plaintiffs allege as follows: 25 1. Arizonans have a constitutional right ensuring that any new tax approved 26 through an initiative or referendum must be backed by at least 60% of voters to become 27

law. Ariz. Const. art. IV, pt. 1, §§ 1(5), (8). This higher threshold guarantees that those new tax measures must be supported by broad consensus.

- 2. Last year, the City of Scottsdale (the "City" or "Scottsdale") launched a referendum to raise its transaction privilege tax ("TPT") and use tax rates by 0.15% beginning on July 1, 2025 (the "Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax" or the "Tax"). The City also passed Ordinance No. 4633, detailing how the revenue from the Tax would be spent if voters approved it.¹
- 3. The Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax did not receive 60% approval in the referendum, so it cannot become law. Nevertheless, Defendants plan to enforce it.
- 4. Plaintiffs ask the Court to declare the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax unconstitutional. They also seek to enjoin state and local authorities from implementing and collecting the Tax and enforcing any penalties related to its nonpayment.

ARIZONA REQUIRES SUPERMAJORITY APPROVAL OF TAX MEASURES

- 5. Arizona's Constitution gives the people the power to directly approve state and local measures through initiative and referendum. This means that the people share legislative authority with the state legislature and local governments. *See* Ariz. Const., art. IV, pt. 1, §§ 1(1), (8).
 - 6. Arizona's Constitution describes the legislative authority as follows:

 The legislative authority of the state shall be vested in the legislature, consisting of a senate and a house of representatives, but the people reserve the power to propose laws and amendments to the constitution and to enact or reject such laws and amendments at the

polls, independently of the legislature, and they also reserve, for use at their own option, the power to approve or reject at the polls any act, or item, section, or part of any act, of the legislature.

act, or item, section, or part of any act, of the legislature.

Id. § 1(1).

7. The people exercise the initiative power by proposing a measure and then approving or disapproving it at the polls. *Id.* § 1(2). Similarly, they exercise the

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¹ City Ordinance No. 4633 can be found here: https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/docs/default-source/scottsdaleaz/elections/ordinance-4633.pdf?sfvrsn=f4599c8e_1

referendum power by approving or disapproving a measure that the legislative body has acted on. *Id.* § 1(3).

- 8. In 1992, Arizonans used the initiative power to amend the Arizona Constitution to require more than a simple majority in the state legislature to approve a new tax measure. That amendment requires two thirds of each chamber of the legislature to approve a new tax, and three quarters of each chamber to override any veto of a tax measure. *See* Ariz. Const., art. IX, § 22.
- 9. In 2022, Arizonans used their referendum power to amend the Arizona Constitution to require more than a simple majority to approve a new tax measure through an initiative or referendum. That amendment requires 60% approval of the tax measure and states in relevant part as follows:

Any measure ... proposed under the initiative, and any measure to which the referendum is applied, shall be referred to a vote of the qualified electors, and for an initiative or referendum to approve a tax, shall become law when approved by sixty percent of the votes cast thereon and upon proclamation of the governor, and not otherwise")

Ariz. Const., art. IV, pt. 1, § 1(5).

10. The initiative and referendum powers are not limited to statewide legislation. Arizona's Constitution also reserves those powers to the people for local legislation:

The powers of the initiative and the referendum are hereby further reserved to the qualified electors of every incorporated city, town and county as to all local, city, town or county matters on which such incorporated cities, towns and counties are or shall be empowered by general laws to legislate. Such incorporated cities, towns and counties may prescribe the manner of exercising said powers within the restrictions of general laws. Under the power of the initiative fifteen percent of the qualified electors may propose measures on such local, city, town or county matters, and ten percent of the electors may propose the referendum on legislation enacted within and by such city, town or county. Until provided by general law, said cities and towns may prescribe the basis on which said percentages shall be computed.

Ariz. Const., art. IV, pt 1, § 1(8).

1 11. When exercising the initiative and referendum powers at the local level, 2 Arizona Revised Statutes Section 19-141 requires that "[t]he procedure with respect to 3 municipal . . . legislation shall be as nearly as practicable the same as the procedure 4 relating to initiative and referendum provided for the state at large" 5 SCOTTSDALE'S CHARTER ACKNOWLEDGES ITS VOTERS' INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM POWERS 6 7 12. Scottsdale is a charter city incorporated in Maricopa County, Arizona. 8 13. Article 10 of Scottdale's Charter acknowledges that the initiative and 9 referendum powers established in Arizona's Constitution are reserved to its voters. 10 14. Article 10 of Scottdale's Charter also provides that, with respect to matters 11 submitted on petition [i.e., citizen initiatives and citizen-initiated referenda], that "[t]he 12 provisions of the constitution and general laws of the state, as the same now exist or 13 hereafter may be amended, governing the initiative and referendum and recall of 14 elected officers shall apply in the city." (Emphasis added.) 15 15. Article 10 of Scottsdale's Charter also states that the City Council, just like 16 the state legislature, may initiate a referendum, stating in relevant part as follows: 17 All city matters on which the council is or shall be empowered to legislate may be submitted by the council, of its own motion, to the 18 electors for adoption or rejection at a general or special election in the same manner and with the same force and effect as matters 19 submitted on petition. 20 *Id.* (emphasis added); see also Ariz. Const., art. IV, pt. 1, § 1(3) & (5). 21 Arizona law and Scottsdale's Charter treat a "council-initiated" referendum 16. 22 the same as a "citizen-initiated" referendum. 23 17. Any tax measure voted on by Scottsdale voters, whether by initiative, citizen-24 initiated referendum, or council-initiated referendum, must comply with the Arizona 25 Constitution, state law, and Scottsdale's Charter: it must garner a broad consensus—at least 26 60% approval—to become law.

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THE SCOTTSDALE TPT AND USE TAX

- 18. On April 2, 2024, the Scottsdale City Council adopted Resolution 13092, Option B (the "Resolution"). Pursuant to the Resolution, the City Council initiated a referendum to approve a new 0.15% sales and use tax effective July 1, 2025, i.e., the Tax. The Tax would be added to the City's overall transaction privilege and use tax rates and would be in force for 30 years.
- 19. Also on April 2, 2024, the Scottsdale City Council passed Ordinance No. 4633. The Ordinance "predetermines" how the City must spend revenue from the Tax.
- 20. The Resolution approved the ballot and other descriptive language for the council-initiated referendum. After losing a legal challenge related to misleading ballot language, the City amended the Resolution on August 20, 2024. *See Lane v. City of Scottsdale*, No. 1 CA-CV 24-0545 EL, 2024 WL 4540407 (Ariz. App., Oct. 22, 2024) (published opinion elaborating on the order filed August 19, 2024, granting relief). The amended Resolution changed the language describing the Scottsdale Sales and Use Tax, including the ballot language.²
- 21. The November 2024 general election in Scottsdale was conducted pursuant to law and did not involve misconduct by election officials, fraud, illegal votes, or an erroneous count of votes. The Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax, which was denominated as "Proposition 490" on the ballot for Scottsdale voters, garnered 82,032 (58.25%) votes approving it and 58,788 (41.75%) votes opposing it.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 22. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to A.R.S. §§ 12-123, 12-1801, and 12-1831.
 - 23. Venue is proper pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-401.

² Resolution No. 13092 – Amended can be found here beginning at page 11: https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/docs/default-source/scottsdaleaz/elections/voting-history/2024-publicity-pamphlet-and-candidate-information-pamphlet.pdf?sfvrsn=14db860c 1.

PLAINTIFFS ARE SCOTTSDALE TAXPAYERS SUBJECT TO THE SCOTTDALE SALES AND USE TAX

(Robert Marc Stamper)

- 24. Plaintiff Robert Marc Stamper is a Scottsdale resident and taxpayer who is harmed by the City's imposition of the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax.
- 25. Mr. Stamper owns a home in Scottsdale and has owned it and resided in it for more than 40 years. He has paid, and will continue to pay, City-imposed property taxes. He also regularly buys goods subject to Scottsdale's transaction privilege and use taxes, and he will continue to engage in these activities.
- Apple Store. To complete the purchases, Mr. Stamper must pay a tax the retailer adds to the price of the goods. Often, the retailer identifies the tax as a line-item on the receipt. The tax line-item represents the "total tax," meaning the total of all transaction privilege taxes applied to the purchase, including Scottsdale's tax. The retailer must pay the amount of the sales tax identified on the receipt to the Arizona Department of Revenue ("ADOR"). ADOR then apportions those moneys to the appropriate taxing authorities, e.g., State of Arizona, Maricopa County, and Scottsdale. Because businesses can and do pass along the TPT directly to customers, Scottsdale's Tax will result in Mr. Stamper paying a higher price for goods he buys in Scottsdale.
- 27. Mr. Stamper is also subject to, and responsible for paying, Scottsdale's "use tax." Scottsdale's use tax can apply when Mr. Stamper buys a good in a jurisdiction with a lower municipal sales tax rate, e.g., the City of Chandler. In that case, Mr. Stamper may be required to pay Scottsdale's use tax, with Scottsdale giving him credit for the sales tax he paid in the other, lower-tax city. Essentially, he is required to pay Scottsdale the difference between the two sales tax rates as a "use tax." Also, when he buys goods online from out-of-state retailers that do not require him to pay Scottsdale's sales tax, he can be subject to Scottsdale's use tax in certain circumstances.
- 28. Mr. Stamper and other similarly situated Scottsdale residents are being harmed because Scottsdale believes the referendum "approved" the Scottsdale TPT and

Use Tax, is taking steps to implement it, and intends to collect and enforce it beginning July 1, 2025. By so doing, the City wastes resources—resources he and others fund through the payment of City taxes—implementing an illegal tax. Furthermore, as of July 1, 2025, Mr. Stamper and other similarly situated residents will suffer pecuniary losses each time they acquire goods and tangible property subject to the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax.

29. Mr. Stamper and other similarly situated Scottsdale residents are also harmed because the Ordinance requires the City to spend the money the Tax raises on designated projects. But that spending is contingent upon the Tax having been approved by law, which it was not. Thus, the City would be spending illegally collected funds, making those expenditures illegal.

(AZ Design Group)

- 30. Plaintiff Gretchen Jacobs dba AZ Design Group ("AZDG") is an interior design business owned by Gretchen Jacobs, a Scottsdale resident and taxpayer. AZDG is a sole proprietorship located in Scottsdale with its trade name registered with the Arizona Secretary of State. AZDG provides interior design advice and furnishings to its customers, including those in Scottsdale. *See* https://azdesigngroup.com/about-us.
- 31. AZDG is a retail seller of home furnishings and pays transaction privilege taxes on those sales. AZDG currently possesses ADOR TPT license 21370635 and has purchased and sold home furnishings subject to an ADOR TPT license.
- 32. As required by law, AZDG pays ADOR the TPT taxes owed when selling home furnishings to customers, including any TPT taxes Scottsdale imposes on its sales in Scottsdale.
- 33. If Scottsdale implements the Tax beginning July 1, 2025, AZDG will be required to pay the Tax on retail sales of home furnishings to Scottsdale customers.

 Otherwise, AZDG risks penalties for not paying it.
- 34. AZDG and other similarly situated retail businesses operating in Scottsdale are being harmed because Scottsdale has represented that the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax

was "approved," is taking steps to implement it, and intends to enforce it beginning July 1, 2025. By so doing, the City wastes City resources—resources AZDG and other businesses fund through their collection and transmittal of sales taxes to ADOR and Scottsdale. Furthermore, as of July 1, 2025, AZDG and other similarly situated businesses operating in Scottsdale will suffer pecuniary losses because the Tax will effectively, and illegally, increase the price retailers must charge for their goods, thereby inhibiting sales.

35. AZDG and other similarly situated businesses in Scottsdale are also harmed because the Ordinance requires the City to spend any money the Tax raises on designated projects. But the City would be spending illegally collected funds, making those expenditures illegal.

DEFENDANTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ENFORCING THE TAX

- 36. Defendant Scottsdale is a charter city located within Maricopa County, Arizona. The City, through its City Council, adopted the Resolution, as amended, and initiated a referendum to approve it. Although the measure failed to garner the 60% approval required by law, the City is taking steps to implement the Tax and will enforce it beginning July 1, 2025.
- 37. Defendants Mayor Lisa Borowsky, Vice Mayor Jan Dubauskas, Councilmember Barry Graham, Councilmember Adam Kwasman, Councilmember Kathy Littlefield, Councilmember Maryann McAllen, and Councilmember Solange Whitehead are members of the Scottsdale City Council and are sued in their official capacities only. In their roles, and as set forth in the City Charter, they are responsible for promulgating, perpetuating, and enforcing the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax and ensuring that the City conducts itself in conformity with the law.
- 38. Defendant Sonia Andrews is the Scottsdale City Treasurer and is sued in her official capacity only. Scottsdale City Code Section 2-131 describes the duties of the City Treasurer, which include the following: "Control receipt and have custody of all the

money of the city ...," (subsection (a)(1)); "Be the person upon whom legal garnishments and demands may be served," (subsection (a)(3)); and "Collect all ... final tax assessments and funds owed to the City," (subsection (a)(16)). Appendix C, Article V, Section 500 of the City Code states that "[t]he administration of this chapter is vested in the Tax Collector, except as otherwise specifically provided, and all payments shall be made to the City Treasurer." The "Tax Collector" is the Treasurer or the finance person who works under her. Given her foregoing duties, Ms. Andrews is responsible for promulgating, perpetuating, and enforcing the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax and ensuring that the City conducts itself in conformity with the law.

- 39. Defendant Greg Caton is the Scottsdale City Manager and is sued in his official capacity only. Scottsdale City Code Section 2-91 describes the duties of the City Manager, which include the following: "Administer and enforce the licensing and tax ordinances" (subsection (a)(3)); and "Coordinate and cooperate with the City Treasurer and provide the City Treasurer and/or his employees with direct access to information and access and control over employees as necessary for the City Treasurer to carry out his charter assignments" (subsection (a)(4)). Given his foregoing duties, Mr. Caton is responsible for promulgating, perpetuating, and enforcing the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax and ensuring that the City conducts itself in conformity with the law.
- 40. Defendant ADOR is a jural entity and a department of the government of the State of Arizona. ADOR is responsible for collecting transaction privilege taxes statewide. In so doing, ADOR collects the TPT levied by local governments, including Scottsdale, holding that money in trust. ADOR is responsible for distributing the proceeds of TPT it collects to the appropriate taxing authorities, including Scottsdale. On information and belief, ADOR intends to collect and distribute the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax beginning July 1, 2025.
- 41. Defendant Ron Wood is the director of ADOR and is sued in his official capacity only. In his role as director, Mr. Wood is responsible for ensuring that ADOR conducts itself in conformance with laws and the Arizona Constitution. As the director of

ADOR, and on information and belief, Mr. Wood intends to direct ADOR to collect and distribute the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax beginning July 1, 2025.

DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

- 42. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege the allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Verified Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 43. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and on that basis allege, that Defendants contend that the Tax was approved by law, are taking steps to implement it, and will collect and enforce it beginning July 1, 2025.
- 44. An actual and substantial controversy exists between Plaintiffs and Defendants as to their respective legal rights and duties regarding the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax. See A.R.S. § 12-1831–1846. Declaratory relief is appropriate and necessary so the parties can know their rights and responsibilities under the law. Given the foregoing, the Court should declare that the Tax is illegal and unenforceable because it was required to have been approved by at least 60% of voters in the referendum.
- 45. Plaintiffs lack a plain, speedy, or adequate legal, administrative, or other remedy, because no administrative process for relief exists and because money damages cannot prevent Defendants from enforcing the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax.
- 46. Plaintiffs are informed and believe, and on that basis allege, that unless enjoined by this Court, Defendants will persist in their unlawful actions and thereby deprive Scottsdale citizens and businesses of their rights under Arizona law.

COUNT I Violation of Arizona Constitution, art. IV, pt. 1, §§ 1, 8—Unlawful Tax

- 47. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege the allegations in the preceding paragraphs and paragraphs 53-57 of this Verified Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 48. The Arizona Constitution, Arizona statutes, and the City Charter require that an initiative or referendum to approve a tax receive at least 60% approval to become law. The City initiated a referendum on the Tax. The Tax did not garner at least 60% approval

and failed to be approved. The Tax has no legal effect and cannot now be lawfully imposed.

- 49. By imposing an illegal tax, Defendants harm Plaintiffs and others similarity ituated
- 50. For the foregoing reasons, the Court should declare that the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax is unlawful and cannot be enforced.
- 51. For the foregoing reasons, the Court should enjoin Defendants from imposing the Tax.

COUNT II Violation of Due Process and Fundamental Fairness – Unlawful Tax

- 52. Plaintiffs repeat and reallege the allegations in the preceding paragraphs of this Verified Complaint as though fully set forth herein.
- 53. Article 2, Section 4, of the Arizona Constitution guarantees that "[n]o person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law."
- 54. Defendants intend to impose the Tax even though it was not approved by law.
- 55. The Tax will deprive Plaintiffs and others similarly situated of their property by compelling them to pay, collect, and transmit the Tax. Persons and entities subject to the Tax are also deprived of property because the Tax makes transactions more costly, which incentivizes consumers to refrain from transactions or choose less costly ones.
- 56. Because the referendum on Tax did not receive 60% approval, it did not become law.
- 57. Defendants violate Plaintiffs' right to due process of law by implementing and enforcing a tax that has not been enacted pursuant to law and deprives them of their property.

1 **REQUESTS FOR RELIEF** 2 Plaintiffs respectfully ask the Court to grant the following relief: 3 A. A declaration that the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax is illegal and 4 unenforceable because it did not receive at least 60% approval in the referendum; 5 В. An injunction preliminarily and permanently enjoining Defendants from 6 implementing and enforcing the Scottsdale TPT and Use Tax; 7 C. An award of attorney fees pursuant to the private attorney general doctrine; 8 D. An award of costs pursuant to A.R.S. § 12-341; and 9 E. Such additional relief as may be just and proper. 10 11 **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED** this 30th day of May 2025. 12 13 **GOLDWATER INSTITUTE** 14 /s/ Scott Day Freeman Jonathan Riches (025712) 15 Scott Day Freeman (019784) Adam Shelton (038252) 16 Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation at the 17 **GOLDWATER INSTITUTE** 500 East Coronado Road 18 Phoenix, Arizona 85004 Attorneys for Plaintiffs 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

VERIFICATION I, Robert Marc Stamper, being duly sworn upon my oath, state that I am familiar with the allegations in the foregoing Verified Complaint and verify that the factual statements set forth in paragraphs 24-26 are true and correct and as to the other factual averments therein I reasonably believe them to be true and correct. Dated this of May 2025, Robert Marc Stamper

VERIFICATION

I, Gretchen Jacobs, being duly sworn upon my oath, state that I am familiar with the allegations in the foregoing Verified Complaint and verify that the factual statements set forth in paragraphs 30–33 are true and correct and as to the other factual averments therein I reasonably believe them to be true and correct.

Dated this 30 of May 2025,

By:

1	Jonathan Riches (025712) Scott Day Freeman (019784)	
2	Adam Shelton (038252) Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Liti	igation at the
3	GOLDWATER INSTITUTE 500 East Coronado Road	
4	Phoenix, Arizona 85004 (602) 462-5000	
5	litigation@goldwaterinstitute.org Attorneys for Plaintiffs	
6		
7	IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF	THE STATE OF ARIZONA
8	IN AND FOR THE COUN	NTY OF MARICOPA
9	ROBERT MARC STAMPER; and GRETCHEN JACOBS dba AZ DESIGN GROUP, a sole proprietorship,	Case No.
10	* * *	CERTIFICATE OF COMPULSORY ARBITRATION
11	Plaintiffs,	(Not Subject)
12	VS.	
13	CITY OF SCOTTSDALE; MAYOR LISA BOROWSKY; VICE MAYOR JAN	
14	DUBAUSKAS; COUNCILMEMBER BARRY GRAHAM; COUNCILMEMBER	
15	ADAM KWASMAN; COUNCILMEMBER MARYANN McALLEN;	
16	COUNCILMEMBER SOLANGE WHITEHEAD; and COUNCILMEMBER	
17	KATHY LITTLEFIELD, each in their official capacities; SONIA ANDREWS, in	
18	her official capacity as Scottsdale City Treasurer; GREG CATON, in his official	
19	capacity as Scottsdale City Manager; ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE;	
20	and ROBERT WOODS, in his capacity as Director of the Arizona Department of	
21	Revenue,	
22	Defendants.	
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24		
25		
26		
27		
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The undersigned certifies that this case is *not subject* to compulsory arbitration, as provided in Rules 72 through 77 of the Arizona Rules of Civil Procedure, because it does not seek monetary damages and only seeks declaratory and injunctive relief. **RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED** this 30th day of May 2025. **GOLDWATER INSTITUTE** /s/ Scott Day Freeman Jonathan Riches (025712) Scott Day Freeman (019784) Adam Shelton (038252) Scharf-Norton Center for Constitutional Litigation at the GOLDWATER INSTITUTE 500 East Coronado Road Phoenix, Arizona 85004 Attorneys for Plaintiffs