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UTAH SUPREME COURT ADOPTS GROUNDBREAKING CHANGES TO LEGAL SERVICE REGULATION

Salt Lake City, Utah— In what is being called one of the most significant moves to narrow the access-to-justice gap ordinary people confront when faced with legal issues, the Utah Supreme Court on Wednesday voted unanimously to approve pursuing changes to the regulatory structure for legal services.

The changes, recommended by a joint Supreme Court/Utah Bar work group, focus on updating rules governing lawyers and allowing non-traditional legal services to be tested and approved in a, “regulatory sandbox.”

The result could mean expanding legal services that will meet the unmet legal needs of a large swath of society.

This is, “[m]aybe the most significant action for the access gap in years,” said Dr. Tom Clark, a leading figure in the access-to-justice arena, and a member of the work group. Chief Justice Matthew Durrant echoed Dr. Clark’s assessment, and reaffirmed the Utah Supreme Court’s, “dedication to tackling the access-to-justice gap,” and thanked the work group for its, “groundbreaking report.”

The work group, chaired by Utah Supreme Court Justice Deno Himonas and former Utah Bar president John Lund, spent the last year working on how best to optimize regulation in a manner that fosters innovation and promotes other market forces so as to increase access to and affordability of legal services. The result was a 71-page study: (<https://www.utahbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FINAL-Task-Force-Report.pdf>).

The next step will be for the Supreme Court to create an implementation task force, which will begin work on putting the recommended changes in place.