REFERENCE TITLE: trusts; estates; policies; procedures

State of Arizona House of Representatives Fifty-seventh Legislature First Regular Session 2025

HB 2657

Introduced by Representative Carter N

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTIONS 14-1201, 14-2302, 14-2402, 14-3716, 14-3718, 14-5101, 14-6102 AND 14-10105; RELATING TO TRUSTS AND ESTATES.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona: Section 1. Section 14-1201, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-1201. <u>Definitions</u>

In this title, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 1. "Agent" includes an attorney-in-fact under a durable or nondurable power of attorney, a person who is authorized to make decisions concerning another person's health care and a person who is authorized to make decisions for another person under a natural death act.
- 2. "Application" means a written request to the registrar for an order of informal probate or appointment under chapter 3, article 3 of this title.
- 3. "Basis for compensation" means an hourly rate, a fixed fee or a contingency fee agreement and reimbursable costs.
- 4. "Beneficiary", as it relates to a trust beneficiary, includes a person who has any present or future interest, vested or contingent, and includes the owner of an interest by assignment or other transfer. As it relates to a charitable trust, beneficiary includes any person entitled to enforce the trust. As it relates to a beneficiary of a beneficiary designation, beneficiary refers to a beneficiary of an insurance or annuity policy, an account with pay on death designation, a security registered in beneficiary form or a pension, profit sharing, retirement or similar benefit plan, or any other nonprobate transfer at death. As it relates to a beneficiary designated in a governing instrument, beneficiary includes a grantee of a deed, a devisee, a trust beneficiary, a beneficiary of a beneficiary designation, a donee, appointee or taker in default of a power of appointment and a person in whose favor a power of attorney or a power held in any person, fiduciary or representative capacity is exercised.
- 5. "Beneficiary designation" refers to a governing instrument naming a beneficiary of an insurance or annuity policy, of an account with pay on death designation, of a security registered in beneficiary form or of a pension, profit sharing, retirement or similar benefit plan, or any other nonprobate transfer at death.
- 6. "Certified paper original" means a tangible medium that contains both the text of an electronic will and any self-proving affidavit concerning the electronic will and that is accompanied by an affidavit that is executed pursuant to section 14-2523.
- 7. "Child" includes a person who is entitled to take as a child under this title by intestate succession from the parent whose relationship is involved. Child excludes a person who is only a stepchild, a foster child, a grandchild or a more remote descendant.
- 8. "Claims", in respect to estates of decedents and protected persons, includes liabilities of the decedent or the protected person, whether arising in contract, in tort or otherwise, and liabilities of the

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estate that arise at or after the death of the decedent or after the appointment of a conservator, including funeral expenses and expenses of administration. Claims do not include estate or inheritance taxes or demands or disputes regarding title of a decedent or a protected person to specific assets alleged to be included in the estate.

- 9. "Community property" means that property of a husband and wife that is acquired during the marriage and that is community property as prescribed in section 25-211.
- 10. "Conservator" means a person who is appointed by a court to manage the estate of a protected person.
 - 11. "Court" means the superior court.
- 12. "Dependent child" means a minor child whom the decedent was obligated to support or an adult child who was in fact being supported by the decedent at the time of the decedent's death.
- 13. "Descendant" means all of the decedent's descendants of all generations, with the relationship of parent and child at each generation.
- 14. "Devise", when used as a noun, means a testamentary disposition of real or personal property and, when used as a verb, means to dispose of real or personal property by will.
- 15. "Devisee" means a person designated in a will to receive a devise. For the purposes of chapter 3 of this title, in the case of a devise to an existing trust or trustee, or to a trustee on trust described by will, the trust or trustee is the devisee and the beneficiaries are not devisees.
- 16. "Disability" means cause for a protective order as described in section 14-5401.
- 17. "Distributee" means any person who has received property of a decedent from that person's personal representative other than as a creditor or purchaser. Distributee includes a testamentary trustee only to the extent of distributed assets or increment that remains in that person's hands. A beneficiary of a testamentary trust to whom the trustee has distributed property received from a personal representative is a distributee of the personal representative. For the purposes of this paragraph, "testamentary trustee" includes a trustee to whom assets are transferred by will, to the extent of the devised assets.
- 18. "Electronic" means having electrical, digital, magnetic, optical, electromagnetic or similar capabilities.
- $\frac{22.}{a}$ 19. "Electronically present" means two or more individuals who are in a different physical location LOCATIONS and who are communicating by means of technology that enables all individuals to see and hear each other in real time to the same extent as if the individuals were physically present in the same location.
- 19. 20. "Electronic record" means a record that is created, generated, sent, communicated, received or stored by electronic means.

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- 20. 21. "Electronic signature" means an electronic method or process that does both of the following:
- (a) Is attached to or logically associated with an electronic record and that is executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the electronic record.
- (b) Uses a security procedure that allows a determination that the electronic signature was all of the following:
 - (i) Unique to the person using it.
 - (ii) Capable of verification.
- (iii) Under the sole control of the person making the electronic signature.
- (iv) Linked to the electronic record to which the electronic signature relates in a manner so that if the electronic record is changed the electronic signature is invalidated.
- $\frac{21.}{22}$. "Electronic will" means a testamentary instrument that is executed and maintained on an electronic medium and that is executed in compliance with section 14-2518.
- 23. "Estate" includes the property of the decedent, trust or other person whose affairs are subject to this title as originally constituted and as it exists from time to time during administration. As it relates to a spouse, the estate includes only the separate property and the share of the community property belonging to the decedent or person whose affairs are subject to this title.
- 24. "Exempt property" means that property of a decedent's estate that is described in section 14-2403.
- 25. "Fiduciary" includes a personal representative, guardian, conservator and trustee.
- 26. "Foreign personal representative" means a personal representative who is appointed by another jurisdiction.
- 27. "Formal proceedings" means proceedings that are conducted before a judge JUDICIAL OFFICER with notice to interested persons.
- 28. "Governing instrument" means a deed, will, trust, insurance or annuity policy, account with pay on death designation, security registered in beneficiary form, pension, profit sharing, retirement or similar benefit plan, instrument creating or exercising a power of appointment or power of attorney or supported decision-making agreement or a dispositive, appointive or nominative instrument of any similar type.
- 29. "Guardian" means a person who has qualified as a guardian of a minor or incapacitated person pursuant to testamentary or court appointment but excludes a person who is merely a guardian ad litem.
- 30. "Guardian ad litem" includes a person who is appointed pursuant to section 14-1408.
- 31. "Heirs", except as controlled by section 14-2711, means persons, including the surviving spouse and the state, who are entitled under the statutes of intestate succession to the property of a decedent.

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- 32. "Incapacitated person" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-5101.
- 33. "Informal proceedings" means those proceedings conducted without notice to interested persons by an officer of the court acting as a registrar for probate of a will or appointment of a personal representative.
- 34. "Interested person" includes any trustee, heir, devisee, child, spouse, creditor, beneficiary, person holding a power of appointment and other person who has a property right in or claim against a trust estate or the estate of a decedent, ward or protected person. Interested person also includes a person who has priority for appointment as personal representative and other fiduciaries representing interested persons. Interested person, as the term relates to particular persons, may vary from time to time and must be determined according to the particular purposes of, and matter involved in, any proceeding.
- 35. "Issue" of a person means descendant as defined in this section.
- 36. "Joint tenants with the right of survivorship" and "community property with the right of survivorship" includes co-owners of property held under circumstances that entitle one or more to the whole of the property on the death of the other or others but excludes forms of co-ownership registration in which the underlying ownership of each party is in proportion to that party's contribution.
 - 37. "Lease" includes any oil, gas or other mineral lease.
- 38. "Letters" includes letters testamentary, letters of guardianship, letters of administration and letters of conservatorship.
 - 39. "Minor" means a person who is under eighteen years of age.
- 40. "Mortgage" means any conveyance, agreement or arrangement in which property is encumbered or used as security. Mortgage does not include leases or easements.
- 41. "Nonresident decedent" means a decedent who was domiciled in another jurisdiction at the time of the decedent's death.
- 42. "Organization" means a corporation, limited liability company, business trust, estate, trust, partnership, joint venture, association, government or governmental subdivision or agency or any other legal or commercial entity.
- 43. "Original will" means either an original paper will or a certified paper original of an electronic will.
- 44. "Paper will" means a testamentary instrument that is executed and maintained on a tangible medium and that is executed in compliance with section 14-2502 or 14-2503.
- 45. "Parent" includes any person entitled to take, or who would be entitled to take if the child died without a will, as a parent under this title by intestate succession from the child whose relationship is in

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question and excludes any person who is only a stepparent, foster parent or grandparent.

- 46. "Payor" means a trustee, insurer, business entity, employer, government, governmental agency or subdivision or any other person who is authorized or obligated by law or a governing instrument to make payments.
 - 47. "Person" means an individual or an organization.
- 48. "Personal representative" includes an executor, an administrator, a successor personal representative, a special administrator and persons who perform substantially the same function under the law governing their status. A general personal representative excludes a special administrator.
- 49. "Petition" means a written request to the court for an order after notice.
 - 50. "Proceeding" includes action at law and suit in equity.
 - 51. "Property" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-10103.
- 52. "Protected person" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-5101.
- 53. "Protective proceeding" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-5101.
- 54. "Qualified custodian" means a person who fulfills the requirements of section 14-2520.
- 55. "Registrar" means the official of the court who is designated to perform the functions of registrar as provided in section 14-1307.
- 56. "Security" includes any note, stock, treasury stock, bond, debenture, evidence of indebtedness, certificate of interest or participation in an oil, gas or mining title or lease or in payments out of production under that title or lease, collateral trust certificate, transferable share or voting trust certificate and, in general, includes any interest or instrument commonly known as a security, or any certificate of interest or participation, any temporary or interim certificate, receipt or certificate of deposit for, or any warrant or right to subscribe to or purchase, any of these securities.
- 57. "Separate property" means that property of a husband or wife that is the spouse's separate property as defined in section 25-213.
- 58. "Settlement", in reference to a decedent's estate, includes the full process of administration, distribution and closing.
- 59. "Special administrator" means a personal representative as described by sections 14-3614 through 14-3618.
 - 60. "State" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-10103.
- 61. "Successor personal representative" means a personal representative, other than a special administrator, who is appointed to succeed a previously appointed personal representative.
- 62. "Successors" means persons, other than creditors, who are entitled to property of a decedent under a will or this title.

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- 63. "Supervised administration" refers to the proceedings described in chapter 3, article 5 of this title.
- . "Survive" means that a person has neither predeceased an event, including the death of another person, nor is deemed to have predeceased an event under section 14-2104 or 14-2702.
- 65. "Tangible medium" means a medium on which information may be inscribed by writing, typing, printing or similar means and that is perceivable by reading directly from the medium on which the information is inscribed.
- 66. "Testacy proceeding" means a proceeding to establish a will or determine intestacy.
 - 67. "Testator" includes a person of either sex.
- 68. "Trust" includes an express trust, private or charitable, with any additions, wherever and however created. Trust also includes a trust created or determined by judgment or decree under which the trust is to be administered in the manner of an express trust. Trust excludes other constructive trusts and excludes resulting trusts, conservatorship, personal representatives, trust accounts, custodial arrangements pursuant to chapter 7, article 7 of this title, business trusts providing for certificates to be issued to beneficiaries, common trust funds, voting trusts, security arrangements, liquidation trusts and trusts for the primary purpose of paying debts, dividends, interest, salaries, wages, profits, pensions or employee benefits of any kind, trusts created by a city or town for the payment of medical insurance, health care benefits or expenses, long-term or short-term disability, self insurance reserves and similar programs administered by a city or town, legal defense trusts and any arrangement under which a person is nominee or escrowee for another.
- 69. "Trustee" includes an original, additional or successor trustee, whether or not appointed or confirmed by the court.
 - 70. "Ward" has the same meaning prescribed in section 14-5101.
- 71. "Will" includes a codicil and any testamentary instrument that merely appoints an executor A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, revokes or revises another will, nominates a guardian OR CONSERVATOR, OR BOTH, or expressly excludes or limits the right of an individual or class to succeed to property of the decedent passing by intestate succession. A will may be a paper will or an electronic will.
- Sec. 2. Section 14-2302, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-2302. Omitted children; shares; definition

- A. Except as provided in subsection ${\color{blue}C}$ D of this section, if a testator fails to provide by will for a child who is born or adopted after the testator executes the will, the omitted child receives a share in the estate as follows:
- 1. If the testator had no child living when the testator executed the will, an omitted child receives a share in the estate equal in value

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to what the child would have received if the testator had died intestate, unless the will devised all or substantially all of the estate to the other parent of the omitted child and that other parent survives the testator and is entitled to take under the will.

- 2. If the testator had one or more children living when the testator executed the will and the will devised property or an interest in property to one or more of the then-living children, an omitted child is entitled to share in the testator's estate as follows:
- (a) The portion of the testator's estate in which the omitted child is entitled to share is limited to devises made to the testator's then-living children under the will.
- (b) As limited under subdivision (a) of this paragraph, the omitted child is entitled to receive the share of the testator's estate that the child would have received if the testator had included all omitted children with the children to whom devises were made under the will and had given an equal share of the estate to each child.
- B. To the extent feasible, the interest granted an omitted child under subsection A, paragraph 2 of this section shall be of the same character, whether equitable or legal, present or future, as that devised to the testator's then-living children under the will.
- C. In satisfying a share prescribed by subsection A, paragraph 2 of this section, devises to the testator's children who were living when the will was executed abate ratably. In abating the devises of the then-living children, the court shall preserve to the maximum extent possible the character of the testamentary plan adopted by the testator.
- D. Subsection A of this section does not apply if either of the following is true:
 - 1. It appears from the will that the omission was intentional.
- 2. The testator provided for the omitted child by transfer outside the will and the intent that the transfer be in lieu of a testamentary provision is shown by the testator's statements or can be reasonably inferred from the amount of the transfer or other evidence.
- E. If at the time the testator executed the will the testator fails to provide by will for a living child solely because the testator believes the child to be dead, the child is entitled to share in the estate as if the child were an omitted after-born or after-adopted child.
- F. In satisfying a share provided by subsection A, paragraph 1 of this section, devises made by the will abate under section 14-3902.
- G. For the purposes of this section, "omitted child" means a child who was born or adopted after the testator executed a will.
- Sec. 3. Section 14-2402, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-2402. Homestead allowance

A. A decedent's surviving spouse is entitled to a homestead allowance of eighteen thousand dollars \$18,000. If there is no surviving

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spouse each minor child and each dependent child of the decedent are entitled to a homestead allowance of eighteen thousand dollars \$18,000 divided by the number of minor and dependent children of the decedent.

- B. The homestead allowance is exempt from and has priority over all claims against the estate, except expenses of administration.
- C. The homestead allowance is chargeable against any benefit or share that passes to the surviving spouse or minor or dependent child by the decedent's will, by nonprobate transfer pursuant to section $\frac{14-6102}{14-6101}$ or by intestate succession, unless it is otherwise provided by the decedent's will or by the governing instrument for a nonprobate transfer. To determine the homestead allowance under this section, a survivorship interest in a joint tenancy of real estate is considered a nonprobate transfer pursuant to section $\frac{14-6102}{14-6101}$.
- Sec. 4. Section 14-3716, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-3716. <u>Powers and duties of successor personal</u> representative

A successor personal representative has the same power and duty as the original personal representative to complete the administration and distribution of the estate, as expeditiously as possible, but he shall not exercise any power expressly made personal to the executor PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE named in the will.

Sec. 5. Section 14-3718, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-3718. <u>Powers of surviving personal representative</u>

Unless the terms of the will otherwise provide, every power exercisable by personal co-representatives may be exercised by the one or more remaining after the appointment of one or more is terminated, and if one of two or more nominated as co-executors CO-PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES is not appointed, those appointed may exercise all the powers incident to the office.

Sec. 6. Section 14-5101, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-5101. Definitions

In this title, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 1. "Contact" includes in-person contact, written communication and all forms of electronic communications.
- 2. "Contact order" means an order allowing contact between a ward and a person with a significant relationship to the ward.
- 3. "Incapacitated person" means any person who is impaired by reason of mental illness, mental deficiency, mental disorder, physical illness or disability, chronic use of drugs, chronic intoxication or other cause, except minority, to the extent that he lacks sufficient understanding or capacity to make or communicate responsible decisions concerning his person. In cases of limited guardianship only, a person is

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 not deemed an incapacitated person for purposes of voting if, the person files a petition and has a hearing and the judge ON PETITION AND AFTER A HEARING, THE JUDICIAL OFFICER determines by clear and convincing evidence that the person retains sufficient understanding to exercise the right to vote pursuant to section 14-5304.02.

- 4. "Inpatient psychiatric facility" means a hospital that contains an organized psychiatric services unit or a special hospital that is licensed to provide psychiatric services.
- 5. "Investigator" means a person who is appointed by the court under section 14-5308.
- 6. "Joint legal decision-making" has the same meaning prescribed in section 25-401.
- 7. "Legal decision-making" has the same meaning prescribed in section 25-401.
- 8. "Minor ward" means a minor for whom a guardian has been appointed solely because of minority.
- 8.9. "Parenting time" has the same meaning prescribed in section 25-401.
- 9. 10. "Physician" means a person licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 13 or 17.
- $\frac{10.}{10.}$ 11. "Protected person" means a minor or any other person for whom a conservator has been appointed or any other protective order has been made.
- 11. 12. "Protective proceeding" means a proceeding under section 14-5401 to determine that a person cannot effectively manage or apply his estate to necessary ends, either because he lacks the ability or is otherwise inconvenienced, or because he is a minor, and to secure administration of his estate by a conservator or other appropriate relief.
- 12. 13. "Psychologist" means a person licensed pursuant to title 32, chapter 19.1.
- $\frac{13.}{14.}$ "Registered nurse" has the same meaning as prescribed in section 32-1601.
- 14. 15. "Significant relationship" means the person either is related to the ward by blood or marriage or is a close friend of the ward as established by a history of pattern and practice.
- $\frac{15.}{16.}$ "Visitation" has the same meaning prescribed in section 25-401.
- $\frac{16.}{10.}$ 17. "Ward" means a person for whom a guardian has been appointed.
- Sec. 7. Section 14-6102, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:
 - 14-6102. <u>Nonprobate transferees; liability for creditor</u> <u>claims and statutory allowances</u>
- A. Except as otherwise provided by law, a transferee of a nonprobate transfer is subject to liability to the decedent's probate

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estate for allowed claims against the decedent's probate estate and statutory allowances to the decedent's spouse and children to the extent the decedent's probate estate is insufficient to satisfy those claims and allowances. The liability of a nonprobate transferee may not exceed the value of nonprobate transfers received or controlled by that transferee.

- B. Nonprobate transferees are liable for the insufficiency described in subsection A of this section in the following order:
- 1. As provided in the decedent's will or any other governing instrument.
- 2. To the extent of the value of the nonprobate transfer received or controlled by the trustee of a trust serving as the principal nonprobate instrument in the decedent's estate plan as shown by its designation as devisee of the decedent's residuary estate or by other facts or circumstances.
- 3. Other nonprobate transferees, in proportion to the values received.
- C. Unless otherwise provided by the trust instrument, interests of beneficiaries in all trusts that incur liabilities under this section abate as necessary to satisfy the liability as if all of the trust interments INSTRUMENTS were a single will and the interest were devises under it.
- D. A provision made in one instrument may direct the apportionment of the liability among the nonprobate transferees taking under that or any other governing instrument. If a provision in one instrument conflicts with a provision in another instrument, the later instrument prevails.
- E. On due notice to a nonprobate transferee, the liability imposed by this section is enforceable in proceedings in this state, wherever the transferee is located.
- F. A proceeding under this section may not be commenced unless the personal representative of the decedent's estate has received from the surviving spouse or a child to the extent that statutory allowances are affected, or from a creditor, a written demand for the proceeding. If the personal representative declines or fails to commence a proceeding after demand, a person making the demand may commence the proceeding in the name of the decedent's estate, at the expense of the person making the demand and not of the estate. A personal representative who declines in good faith to commence a requested proceeding incurs no personal liability for declining.
- G. A proceeding under this section must be commenced within two years after the decedent's death, but a proceeding on behalf of a creditor whose claim was allowed after proceedings challenging disallowance of the claim may be commenced within sixty days after final allowance of the claims.
- H. Unless a written notice asserting that a decedent's probate estate is insufficient to pay allowed claims and statutory allowances have

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 been received from the decedent's personal representative, the following rules apply:

- 1. Payment or delivery of assets by any financial institution, registrar or other obligor to a nonprobate transferee in accordance with the terms of the governing instrument controlling the transfer releases the obligor from all claims for amounts paid or assets delivered.
- 2. A trustee receiving or controlling a nonprobate transfer is released from liability under this section on any assets distributed to the trust's beneficiaries. Each beneficiary to the extent of the distribution received becomes liable for the amount of the trustee's liability attributable to that asset imposed by subsections B and C of this section.
- I. For the purposes of this section a nonprobate transfer is a valid transfer effective at death, other than a transfer of a survivorship interest in a joint tenancy of real estate, by a transferor whose last domicile was in this state, and to the extent that the transferor immediately before death had power, acting alone, to prevent the transfer by revocation or withdrawal and to instead use the property for the benefit of the transferor or apply it to discharge claims against the transfer's probate estate. With respect to multiple party accounts, the portion of the account that is a nonprobate transfer is that portion of that account to which the decedent was beneficially entitled immediately before death pursuant to section 14-6211.
- Sec. 8. Section 14-10105, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended to read:

14-10105. <u>Default and mandatory rules</u>

- A. Except as otherwise provided in the terms of the trust, this chapter governs:
- 1. The duties, powers, exercise of powers, resignation and appointment of a trustee.
 - 2. Conflicts of interest of a trustee.
 - 3. Relations among trustees.
 - 4. Mergers COMBINATIONS or divisions of trusts.
 - 5. The rights and interests of a beneficiary.
- B. The terms of a trust prevail over any provision of this chapter except:
 - 1. The requirements for creating a trust.
- 2. The duty of a trustee to act in good faith and in accordance with the purposes of the trust.
- 3. The requirement that a trust and its terms be for the benefit of its beneficiaries and that the trust have a purpose that is lawful, not contrary to public policy and possible to achieve.
- 4. The power of the court to modify or terminate a trust under sections 14-10410, 14-10411, 14-10412, 14-10413, 14-10414, 14-10415 and 14-10416.

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- 5. The effect of a spendthrift provision and the rights of certain creditors and assignees to reach a trust as provided in article 5 of this chapter.
- 6. The power of the court under section 14-10702 to require, dispense with, modify or terminate a bond.
- 7. The power of the court under section 14-10708, subsection B to adjust a trustee's compensation specified in the terms of the trust that is unreasonably low or high.
- 8. The duty to respond to the request of a qualified beneficiary of an irrevocable trust for trustee's reports and other information reasonably related to the administration of a trust.
 - 9. The effect of an exculpatory term under section 14-11008.
- 10. The rights under sections 14-11010, 14-11011, 14-11012 and 14-11013 of a person other than a trustee or beneficiary.
 - 11. Periods of limitation for commencing a judicial proceeding.
- 12. The power of the court to take action consistent with the settlor's intent and exercise jurisdiction as may be necessary in the interests of justice.
- 13. The subject matter jurisdiction of the court and venue for commencing a proceeding as provided in sections 14-10203 and 14-10204.
 - 14. The notice provisions of section 14-10110, subsection B.
- 15. The enforceability of a penalty clause under section 14–10113.

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