



The Capitol Connection

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS • OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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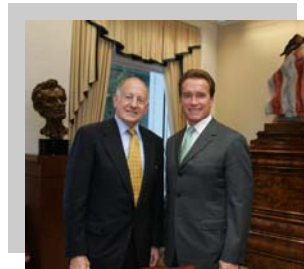
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Legislative Calendar

February 18
Last day for bills to be introduced

CHIEF JUSTICE AND GOVERNOR DISCUSS JUDICIAL BRANCH GOALS

Chief Justice Ronald M. George and CAOC leaders met with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and his key staff on December 16, 2004, to discuss the current state of the judiciary, as well as judicial branch goals for the future. The meeting covered critical topics including the judicial branch budget, the anticipated trial court facilities bond, and the need for new judgeships.



Chief Justice Ronald M. George and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in the Governor's Suite.
Photo: Courtesy of the Governor's Office

The need for new judgeships is particularly crucial given the enormous population growth in California over the last twenty years. A recent study by the AOC and the National Center for State Courts estimates that well over 300 new judgeships are needed; however, given current budget constraints, the Judicial Council is re-

questing only the 150 most critically needed to be created over three fiscal years. The consequences of too few judicial officers are serious: public safety can be endangered, and backlogs in criminal cases force delays in civil case proceedings. In Riverside County, for example, the Superior Court was forced to suspend its entire civil caseload for several weeks to focus exclusively on the criminal matters.

Recognizing the importance of maintaining a strong and independent judiciary, Governor Schwarzenegger and his Administration have exhibited a commitment to working cooperatively with the Judicial Council to address these issues. The Judicial Council and its Office of Governmental Affairs look forward to continued collaboration with the Governor and his staff. ■

LEGISLATOR PROFILE: ASSEMBLY MEMBER DAVE JONES, CHAIR, ASSEMBLY JUDICIARY

Assembly Member Dave Jones was elected November 2, 2004, to represent the 9th Assembly District covering Sacramento County. Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez later named Jones, a Democrat, to chair the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

"I am very humbled that the Speaker has charged me with such a large responsibility," said Assembly Member Jones. "I am ready to roll up my sleeves and learn about the issues facing the committee."

Jones served as a member of the Sacramento City Council for

more than five years, advocating for progressive policies in areas such as affordable housing, living wages, smart growth, school safety, transportation and the environment. He served as a chair and member on numerous boards and commissions, including the Sacramento Regional Transit District, the Sacramento Metropolitan Cable Commission, Sacramento Regional Sanitation District, Sacramento



Assembly Member Dave Jones

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ASSEMBLY MEMBER DAVE JONES

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Solid Waste Authority, and Sacramento Transportation Authority.

Before taking his seat on the city council, Assembly Member Jones worked for six years as a legal aid attorney with Legal Services of Northern California, providing free legal assistance to the poor. One of 15 lawyers in the Assembly, the Judiciary Committee assignment gives Jones a unique opportunity to shape legal issues of interest. "One issue of particular concern to me as a former legal aid lawyer, is equal access to justice," Jones said. "The courts should be open and accessible to all Californians, not just the well-to-do."

In 1995, Jones was one of only 13 Americans awarded the

prestigious and competitive White House Fellowship, and he served in the Clinton Administration for three years as counsel to United States Attorney General Janet Reno. He has also served as a policy and legal advisor in the California State Assembly. Jones is a graduate of DePauw University, Harvard Law School, and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He and his wife, Kim Flores, have two young children and reside in Sacramento. ■

In future issues, The Capitol Connection will feature an in-depth interview with Assembly Member Jones and profiles on newly-elected legislators who are attorneys.

GOVERNOR RELEASES STATE BUDGET FOR 2005-06: NEW FORMAT FOR JUDICIAL BRANCH ITEMS

On January 10, 2005, the Governor released his 2005-06 budget that proposes \$111.7 billion in spending. The budget identifies a shortfall of \$9.1 billion and proposes a number of strategies to eliminate the deficit, including the use of Economic Recovery Bonds, suspension of Proposition 42 transportation funds, reduced funding for Proposition 98 education funding, and reductions in other program areas such as health and human services, general government, resources, the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency, and across-the-board reductions in additional departments.

For the first time, the budgets of the Judiciary and State Trial Court Funding are combined into one item. The Governor proposes a total of \$3.1 billion in spending for the judicial branch. The budget includes new funding for Capital Central Staff in the Supreme Court and Mediation of Civil Appeals totaling \$650,000. The budget provides \$88.4 million in the current year (2004-05) and \$92.5 million in the budget year (2005-06) to fund mandatory cost items in the trial courts such as retirement, salary and health benefits, and county charges.

The budget also provides the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) with reimbursement authority (\$13.1 million) to fund implementation of statewide administrative

infrastructure to support trial courts. This is not a new program but, rather, continues to implement services to trial courts previously provided by the counties. Some services currently provided through contract will be provided by the AOC, others will be put in place over the next two years as workload increases. The budget provides the appropriation authority to the AOC to use monies once spent for contracts to support personnel, to use funding from increased collections revenue, and to use revenue from payments made to the AOC for administrative services for trial courts.

Lastly, consistent with trailer bill legislation passed with the 2004 Budget Act, the budget includes \$97.4 million in funding provided to the trial courts as a growth factor related to the State Appropriations Limit (SAL). The amount of the increase will be revised at the time of the May Revision as the SAL is finalized by the Department of Finance. The Governor proposes to make a similar annual adjustment based on the SAL for the budget of the entire Judiciary starting in 2007-08.

For more information about the judicial branch budget, contact the Office of Governmental Affairs. ■

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

The Senate and Assembly recently announced the following committee assignments for the 2005-06 legislative session.

Assembly Judiciary Committee

Dave Jones (D) - Sacramento [Chair]
Tom Harman (R) - Huntington Beach [Vice Chair]
Noreen Evans (D) - Santa Rosa
Ray Haynes (R) - Murrieta
John Laird (D) - Santa Cruz
Tim Leslie (R) - Tahoe City
Lloyd Levine (D) - Sherman Oaks
Sally Lieber (D) - Santa Clara
Cindy Montanez (D) - San Fernando

Assembly Public Safety Committee

Mark Leno (D) - San Francisco [Chair]
Jay La Suer (R) - La Mesa [Vice Chair]
Rebecca Cohn (D) - Saratoga
Mervyn Dymally (D) - Compton
Jackie Goldberg (D) - Los Angeles
Ira Ruskin (D) - Redwood City
Todd Spitzer (R) - Orange

Assembly Appropriations Committee

Judy Chu (D) - Monterey Park [Chair]
Sharon Runner (R) - Lancaster [Vice Chair]
Karen Bass (D) - Los Angeles
Patty Berg (D) - Eureka
Ron Calderon (D) - Montebello
Bill Emmerson (R) - Rancho Cucamonga
Mike Gordon (D) - El Segundo
Ray Haynes (R) - Murrieta
Betty Karnette (D) - Long Beach
Johan Klehs (D) - San Leandro
Mark Leno (D) - San Francisco
Alan Nakanishi (R) - Lodi
Joe Nation (D) - San Rafael
Jenny Oropeza (D) - Long Beach
Mark Ridley-Thomas (D) - Los Angeles
Lori Saldaña (D) - San Diego
Mimi Walters (R) - Laguna Niguel
Leland Yee (D) - San Francisco

Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4

Rudy Bermudez (D) - Norwalk [Chair]
Juan Arambula (D) - Fresno
Chuck DeVore (R) - Irvine
Nicole Parra (D) - Hanford
Michael Villines (R) - Fresno

For more information on the State Assembly, visit the Web site at: www.assembly.ca.gov.

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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

(Continued from page 3)

Senate Appropriations Committee

Carole Migden (D) - San Francisco [Chair]
Sam Aanestad (R) - Grass Valley [Vice Chair]
Elaine Alquist (D) - Santa Clara
Roy Ashburn (R) - Bakersfield
Jim Battin (R) - La Quinta
Debra Bowen (D) - Marina del Rey
Robert Dutton (R) - Rancho Cucamonga
Martha Escutia (D) - Norwalk
Kevin Murray (D) - Los Angeles
Deborah Ortiz (D) - Sacramento
Chuck Poochigian (R) - Fresno
Jackie Speier (D) - Hillsborough
Vacancy

Senate Judiciary Committee

Joe Dunn (D) - Santa Ana [Chair]
Bill Morrow (R) - Oceanside [Vice Chair]
Dick Ackerman (R) - Irvine
Gil Cedillo (D) - Los Angeles
Martha Escutia (D) - Norwalk
Liz Figueroa (D) - Fremont
Sheila Kuehl (D) - Santa Monica

Senate Public Safety Committee

Elaine Alquist (D) - Santa Clara [Chair]
Chuck Poochigian (R) - Fresno [Vice Chair]
Gil Cedillo (D) - Los Angeles
Bob Margett (R) - Arcadia
Carole Migden (D) - San Francisco
Don Perata (D) - Oakland
Gloria Romero (D) - Los Angeles

For more information on the State Senate, visit the Web site at: www.sen.ca.gov.

**All Bench-Bar Coalition Members:
Mark your Calendars!**

**The BBC will hold a
Day in Sacramento at the
State Capitol on**

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

**in conjunction with the
State of the Judiciary Address
by
Chief Justice Ronald M. George**

**For more information, please contact Dia Poole at
dia.poole@jud.ca.gov
or call (916) 323-3121**

“THE CAPITOL CONNECTION” IS CHANGING!

The *Capitol Connection* is changing to serve you better! Our readers have asked, so we are expanding our legislative reporting to give you more information on bills that impact the judicial branch. Starting with our next issue:

- You will find the very latest news on Judicial Council-sponsored legislation just inside the front cover - on page 2.
- We are moving our Legislative Review section to page 3, so you can easily access the list of bills we are watching.
- Bills that are included in the Legislative Review section for the first time will be listed under the heading “New in this Issue.”
- In the main body of the report, under the heading “Measures to Review,” we will list bills that 1) we are seeking comment on regarding potential fiscal, operational, or workload impacts on the court should the bill be signed into law, 2) we have previously reported on, but have since been amended, or 3) the Judicial Council has adopted a position on since we last reported on the bill.
- Readers will be provided the email address of the Office of Governmental Affairs (OGA) advocate who is responsible for analyzing the bill and for presenting it to the Judicial Council’s Policy Coordination and Liaison Committee (PCLC) and various advisory committees. That way, you can be assured that your comments reach the right person and your concerns can be addressed.
- To keep you informed about current legislation considered by the PCLC, we will include the link to our

Legislative Status Report, which can be found on our public Web site: visit <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/cr-legis.htm>, then scroll to the bottom of the page and click “Click here to view the chart” located under “Go to the Office of Governmental Affairs.” OGA updates the status chart after each PCLC meeting with the status of legislation that the PCLC has taken a position on. In the chart, the bills are listed in numerical order by house (Assembly and Senate) and are indexed by subject matter. The status chart also includes a description of the bill on which the PCLC position was based along with subsequent updates and amendments.

You will also note that, beginning with this edition, we will discontinue the Ripped from the Headlines section of *The Capitol Connection*. As of Monday, January 31, the AOC Public Information Office and the OGA are joining forces to provide a combined electronic daily news service. As a result, we no longer archive news clips in the manner required to produce “Ripped.” We are offering regional, state, and national news on the courts and judicial administration - with a new section featuring Sacramento news from OGA. The new service is designed to streamline our previous news services and provide greater efficiency for both offices. We believe you will enjoy the new format for OGA’s news clips. To subscribe, please contact Luz Bobino at (916) 323-3121 or e-mail luz.bobino@jud.ca.gov.

We trust that these improvements will continue to meet your needs for accurate and reliable information from OGA. Please contact Dia Poole, Editor-in-Chief, at (916) 323-3121 or email dia.poole@jud.ca.gov with your questions or comments. Thank you for subscribing to *The Capitol Connection*! ■

MICHELE WILLIAMSON BRINGS NEW TALENTS TO OGA



Michele Williamson joined the staff of the Office of Governmental Affairs on Tuesday, January 18 as a secretary. In addition to serving as the receptionist, Ms. Williamson will assist with

OGA’s outreach and liaison programs, including *The Capitol Connection*.

Williamson served five years active duty as an executive secretary and information manager in the United States

Air Force, and then worked as a contractor writing proposals and analyses on government security projects. She is currently studying for her bachelor’s degree in business with a concentration on human resources. She is excited to be with the Judicial Council and eager to learn about the judicial branch!

Michele can be reached at (916) 323-3121 or michele.williamson@jud.ca.gov. ■



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Archives

Looking for a past issue of *The Capitol Connection*? Find it online at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/aoc/capconn.htm.

IN STATE OF THE STATE, GOVERNOR CALLS FOR REDISTRICTING AND RETIREMENT REFORM



Photo: Russell Stiger

On January 5, 2005, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger delivered his second State of the State Address, which covered reforms ranging from merit-based teachers' pay to prescription drug discount cards. Two issues of note: redistricting legislative and congressional districts and reforming the state pension system.

To justify his proposal for redistricting, Governor Schwarzenegger points to

over 150 legislative and congressional seats that did not change party affiliation after the last election. He sees this result as an indication that "the practice [of gerrymandering] is still alive and well today." To counteract this trend, Governor Schwarzenegger proposes to create a panel of retired judges to independently assess and redraw district lines. In a special session after the State of the State, Assembly Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy authored a constitutional amendment, ACAX1 3, which establishes a panel of retired judges to approve a redistricting plan. Prior to the Governor's address, there were two bills that targeted redistricting. In SCA 3, Senator Alan Lowenthal proposes an independent commission to determine a redistricting plan and grants the Supreme Court sole jurisdiction over all challenges to that plan. Assemblymen Bill Maze authored ACA 8, which also utilizes retired judges as the deciding body for a redistricting plan.

Governor Schwarzenegger also called for reforms in California's pension system. He noted that the state's pension obligations have grown to more than sixteen times its obligation in 2000. The governor described the system as "another government program out of control" and proposed implementing a defined contribution system for new state employees. This would affect all judicial branch state employees hired after July 1, 2007, a date proposed by Assemblyman Keith Richman.

To read the complete text of the Governor's address, visit <http://www.governor.ca.gov> and click on "Speeches." For more information on legislative bills, visit <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/bilinfo.html> ■

News From the AOC

In addition to *The Capitol Connection*, the Administrative Office of the Courts publishes several newsletters reporting on various aspects of court business. Visit these online on the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov. To subscribe to these newsletters, contact pubinfo@jud.ca.gov.

CFCC Update: Reports on developments in juvenile and family law, including innovative programs, case law summaries from the AOC's Center for Families, Children and the Courts; grants and resources, and updates on legislation and rules and forms. Published three times a year. See www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/resources/publications/newsletter.htm.

Court News: Award-winning bimonthly newsmagazine for court leaders reporting on developments in court administration statewide. Indexed from 2000 at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtnews.