



MEDIA ADVISORY

Release Number: 48

Release Date: December 9, 2009

Judicial Council to Hold Public Meeting in San Francisco on Dec. 15th

Council Considers Judicial Election Reforms, Public Access Proposals, Judicial Benefits, and CEO Compensation

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San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California will hold a public business meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:40 p.m. on Tuesday, December 15, 2009, at the Judicial Council Conference Center, Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building, Third Floor, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco.

Chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, the council is the administrative policymaking body of the California courts. The meeting will be audiocast live on the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc. Meeting materials are now available at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age121509.pdf>.

The council's discussion agenda includes the following five reports:

Public Access to Court Records: The council will consider proposed new rules of court that establish public access to judicial administrative records held by the trial and appellate courts, the Judicial Council, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The proposed rules would replace the current rule of court that provides access to a limited category of superior court and AOC records on budget and financial information. If approved, the new rules would become effective January 1, 2009.

Judicial Election Reforms: The Commission for Impartial Courts will present its final report and recommendations for safeguarding judicial quality, impartiality and accountability. The report's 71 recommendations promote ethical and professional conduct by judicial candidates; better regulate campaign financial practices; expand public information and education about the judiciary; and improve the methods for selecting and retaining judges.

Disparities in Judicial Benefits: The council will be asked to approve a

report to the Legislature that analyzes the historical disparities in supplemental judicial benefits in state trial courts. The report responds to Senate Bill X2 11, which requires the Judicial Council to report to the Legislature on this issue by December 31, 2009. The report states that the council will study this area further.

Court Management Compensation: The council will consider a report on executive management salaries and benefits in the trial courts, as well as recommendations that will ensure appropriate accountability. The report is in response to a 2008 special audit of executive compensation practices in the Superior Court of Placer County. A report with a draft rule of court is expected to be presented to the council in April 2010.

Legislative Priorities: The council will consider a recommendation that it seek sufficient funding from the Legislature to permit courts to be open and operating every court day. The council also will consider seeking legislative authorization for a third set of 50 judgeships in state trial courts.

Uniform Bail and Penalty Schedules: As part of its consent agenda, the council will consider proposed revisions to the Uniform Bail and Penalty Schedules, to become effective January 1, 2020. The proposed revisions would bring the schedules into conformance with recent legislation.

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.