



# NEWS RELEASE

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## Judicial Council Accepts Major Report on Domestic Violence Court Improvements

### *Task Force Proposes 139 Guidelines and Practices to Improve Administration of Critical Cases*

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California today received and accepted a comprehensive report that recommends 139 new guidelines and practices designed to improve the administration of justice in domestic violence cases.

Approved by unanimous vote of the 28-member council, the report by the council's Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force culminates a two-year study by court leaders on cases that have a major impact on the lives of Californians.

Chaired by retired Presiding Justice Laurence Donald Kay, of the First Appellate District, the task force was appointed in 2005 by Chief Justice Ronald M. George to ensure fair and accessible justice for domestic violence litigants and to promote victim safety and perpetrator accountability. The major recommendations would do the following:

**Court leadership.** These proposals would encourage greater collaboration among the courts and justice system agencies and would improve judicial education on domestic violence cases.

**DVPA restraining orders.** This set of proposals would simplify, streamline, and improve procedures for restraining orders under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, from the perspective of litigants, the court, and law enforcement agencies.

**Firearms relinquishment.** Under California law, the restrained person must comply with the order to relinquish firearms. The proposals suggest numerous practices, legislation, and court forms that would improve this process and promote the safety of domestic violence victims.

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**Access to and entry of orders into statewide databases.** These proposals present immediate, interim, and long-range goals for improving access to and entry of restraining orders into the Domestic Violence Restraining Order System (DVROS) via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS).

**Criminal law procedures.** In a 2005 report, then Attorney General Bill Lockyer outlined a series of problematic practices and recommendations relating to the adjudication of criminal domestic violence cases. The proposed practices seek to address issues raised in that report and to improve practices in domestic violence criminal cases in general.

In related actions today, the Judicial Council approved the appointment of an implementation task force to ensure that the recommendations are referred to the appropriate entities for review and follow-up action. The council also directed that the panel determine the additional resources that courts will require to implement the guidelines and practices and report its progress to the council by June 2009.

Justice Tani Gorre Cantil-Sakauye, Court of Appeal, Third Appellate District, serves as the task force's criminal procedure working group, and Judge Mary Ann Grilli, Superior Court of Santa Clara County, serves as the restraining order working group chair.

The report of the task force, which is composed of statewide court leaders, is available at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/reports/022208item9.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/reports/022208item9.pdf).

*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.*