



NEWS RELEASE NR 14-09
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 11, 2009

New Report Releases Findings of a Statewide Study of California Class Action Litigation

Study Delivers First Comprehensive Statewide Data

San Francisco—The first report from the largest-ever statewide study of California class action litigation was released today. The report supplies previously unavailable data about class action cases filed in California between 2000 and 2005. The study was undertaken by the Administrative Office of the Courts in collaboration with the University of California Hastings College of the Law.

“Until now, state court class actions have been something of a mystery,” said Hastings law professor Richard Marcus. “The current project, for the first time, provides real data about them. Hastings is proud and delighted to be able to collaborate in this project. Altogether, California will benefit for years to come from this ongoing research effort.”

The report confirms that filings of employment class actions in California state courts have been on the rise. The study also found that, although the enactment of the federal Class Action Fairness Act in 2005 has resulted in an increase in the number of cases removed from state court, it has not significantly affected the class action caseload in California’s state courts.

The study also found:

- Overall, class action filings in California courts increased by 63 percent between 2000 and 2005.
- While filings of employment class actions increased steadily during the study period, filings of business tort class actions declined by 31 percent between 2002 and 2005.
- Effective case management practices lead to case coordination, consolidation, and removal to federal court very early in the life of the class action case.
- Class actions rarely proceed through trial to a verdict. Out of more than 1,500 cases reviewed, the study identified only 9 class actions that ended in a verdict after trial and only 2 of those reached a verdict with a certified class.

This report as well as a fact sheet, Study of California Class Action Litigation, is available online at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/resandstats.htm>. For further information, contact Hilary Hehman of the AOC’s Office of Court Research at hilary.hehman@jud.ca.gov or 415-865-7786.

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