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Judicial Council Takes Action to Improve Public Trust and Confidence in Courts

San Francisco—In response to a statewide survey on public trust and confidence in the courts, the Judicial Council of California today accepted a report on eight short-term strategies, identified by court and bar leaders, that will address the public's top concerns about the judicial branch:

- Improve court user satisfaction in the family, juvenile, and traffic courts.
- Improve and enhance the courts' use of the Internet for disseminating information and conducting court business.
- Reduce case delays and continuances.
- Emphasize procedural fairness in court training programs.
- Leverage jury service and other venues of contact with the public as a means of educating the public about courts.
- Revive community-focused court planning.
- Increase the availability of affordable legal representation.
- Expand services to non-English-speaking court users.

The report highlights more than 160 new and ongoing initiatives that are planned by council advisory committees to carry out these strategies over the next 12 to 18 months. The strategies will be reviewed further by the council at a planning meeting later this year.

The first study of its kind since 1992, the Judicial Council's *Public Trust and Confidence in the California Courts* survey was released in 2005.

It showed that 67 percent of Californians surveyed have a positive view of the courts, compared to less than 50 percent in 1992. The survey also showed that the key predictor of public trust and confidence is the perception that court procedures are fair.

(http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/4_37pubtrust.htm)

Today's report is available at

www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/reports/0224item8.pdf.

Other Council Business

At its public business meeting today, the Judicial Council also:

Judicial branch education: Approved guidelines for a judicial education program in science and technology to assist judges in evaluating scientific evidence and expert testimony. (See News Release # 18/2006).

Self-help centers: Received a report on initiatives to support California trial courts in planning, implementing, and improving assistance to self-represented litigants.

Key council initiatives: Received a report on new and ongoing council initiatives to provide interpreters in civil cases, probate conservatorships, domestic violence cases, foster care, and infrastructure review.

The Judicial Council's agenda and reports are available at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age022406.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.

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