NEWS RELEASE

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California State Courts Close Wednesday, October 21

Closures Result of Unprecedented State Budget Cuts

San Francisco—All California state courts will close Wednesday, October 21, 2009, as a cost-saving measure to help courts cope with unprecedented budget reductions in the judicial branch of government.

Authorized by Government Code section 68106, which was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, the Judicial Council approved the court closures on the third Wednesday of the month starting in September 2009 and continuing through June 2010.

"The mission of the Judicial Council is to improve access to justice, so it was extremely difficult for us to make any decision that results in closing our courts," stated Chief Justice Ronald M. George, chair of the Judicial Council, the 27-member policymaking body for the state courts.

In the face of severe budget reductions, however, the Chief Justice stated that the council approved the closures as a way to partially offset the budget cutbacks while seeking to protect court employees and critical court programs that provide services to the public.

Court Closure Days

All state courts will be closed on October 21, 2009: the Supreme Court of California, the Courts of Appeal, and the superior courts in each of California's 58 counties. The Administrative Office of the Courts will be closed on the same day as the courts.

This is the second day that state courts have closed. The remaining court closure days are November 18, 2009; December 16, 2009; January 20, 2010; February 17, 2010; March 17, 2010; April 21, 2010; May 19, 2010; and June 16, 2010.

Closing state courts one day a month may result in savings of about $94.3 million statewide. In addition to court closures, the Judicial Council took other actions to reduce the impact of the judicial branch's $414 million budget reduction.

The council reallocated $165 million in special funds to offset cuts to the trial court operations budget. The special funds address a portion of the court funding cuts and unfunded growth costs for court security, dependency counsel for children in neglect and abuse cases, court interpreters for those who speak little or no English, and employee retirement costs. The council also allocated $46.7 million in projected new fee revenues to the trial courts.

Court closure days are to be counted as holidays for the purpose of computing time for statutory deadlines. See the full report approved by the Judicial Council at this link: *www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age072909.pdf*.

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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 ensures leadership and excellence in court administration.