



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Governor Signs Legislation to Improve Probate Conservatorship Cases**

### ***Chief Justice Supports Increased Protections for One of State's Most Vulnerable Populations***

San Francisco—Chief Justice Ronald M. George today commended Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger for signing the Omnibus Conservatorship and Guardianship Reform Act of 2006, a package of four bills designed to improve the administration of probate conservatorship cases in trial courts.

“The legislative package signed today will make long-needed reforms in the administration of probate conservatorship cases in California trial courts and will help protect one of our state’s most vulnerable populations,” Chief Justice George declared. “These bills, combined with the upcoming final report and recommendations of the Judicial Council’s Probate Conservatorship Task Force, should make a lasting improvement in the administration of these important cases.”

William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the California Courts, stated, “The judicial branch appreciates the leadership and vision of the Governor’s Office and Legislature in approving these measures, which will provide much-needed support for judges in the management of probate conservatorship cases. We look forward to our continued partnership with both branches of government to ensure that sufficient resources are provided for the courts so that the reforms outlined in the bills are a reality for the most vulnerable in our state who need additional protection.”

The four bills in the Omnibus Conservatorship and Guardianship Reform Act of 2006 provide the following:

**AB 1363 (Jones)**—Makes a number of reforms of the probate conservatorship system, including enhanced court review of conservatorships primarily through increasing the frequency and scope of court investigations.

(over)

**SB 1116 (Scott)**—Increases court oversight of moves of conservatees and the sale of their homes.

**SB 1550 (Figueroa)**—Enacts the Professional Fiduciaries Act, which establishes in the Department of Consumer Affairs a new licensure scheme governing professional conservators, guardians, and other fiduciaries.

**SB 1716 (Bowen)**—Authorizes court action in response to ex parte communications or informal complaints regarding a conservator or the performance of a conservator’s fiduciary duties.

In January 2006, Chief Justice George appointed the Judicial Council Probate Conservatorship Task Force and charged it with increasing the accountability of family and private conservators and improving court oversight of probate conservatorship cases.

The task force, chaired by Administrative Presiding Justice Roger W. Boren, of the Court of Appeal, Second Appellate District, is expected to make an interim report next month and a final report and recommendations next spring.

More information on the task force is available on the California Courts Web site at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/tflists/probcons.htm>.

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