



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA • ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS
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Working Group and Appellate Leaders Wrestle with Judicial Branch Cuts to Maintain Services to the Public

Judicial Council Meets July 22 to Consider Proposals

SAN FRANCISCO—The Trial Court Budget Working Group and representatives of appellate court leadership held a special joint meeting yesterday to address a \$350 million reduction for the judicial branch that was approved by the state Legislature and the Governor.

As part of a two-year approach for managing the reduction, the working group reached consensus with appellate representatives and agreed on a plan that would result in a 6.7 percent cut in funding for California's 58 trial courts, a 9.7 percent cut in funding for the California Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal, and a 12 percent reduction in funding for the Judicial Council and its staff arm, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). All of these reductions would rise to an ongoing level of 15.2 percent for all judicial branch entities next year. The working group also recommended a one year suspension in the deployment of the California Court Case Management System (CCMS).

The recommendations came after seven hours of lively debate and several split votes as the working group and appellate leaders struggled with the difficult challenge of balancing the judicial branch budget while maintaining the highest level of service for court users. A proposal to put CCMS on hold for six months was narrowly rejected by a vote of 11-13 while a proposal to suspend the program for a full year was adopted by a 15-10 vote.

The working group is composed of 15 presiding judges and 15 executive officers from throughout the state while the appellate representatives included leaders from the state's Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal.

These recommendations will be considered by the Judicial Council at its special July 22 meeting in San Francisco as part of its overall review of branch funding allocations for the current fiscal year. The council can accept, modify or reject the recommendations, which will be posted on the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/policyadmin-jc.htm

Since 2008, the state has reduced funding for the court system by \$652 million. Judicial branch leaders, led by Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, have argued vigorously against additional deep cuts to the branch, warning that it could mean fewer services for the public, individual court closures or reductions in operating hours, and the possibility of more furloughs and layoffs for court employees.

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“The current year 12 percent cut to the Judicial Council/AOC will result in continuing furloughs of at least one day per month, which have been in effect for 2 1/2 years, elimination of positions vacated through attrition and not filled, staff layoffs, and other service reductions to the courts and public” said Ron Overholt, AOC Chief Deputy Director.

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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 promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.