



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

One Day Divorce Program- April 12, 2013

Sacramento Superior Court announces a new program to help cooperating couples, or single parties whose spouses have defaulted to complete a simple divorce in one day. After the initial filing and serving of the petition, unrepresented litigants can attain a fast, affordable and most importantly fair resolution of their simple divorce.

In a time when budget cuts are forcing courts all over California to limit services to the public, judges and court professionals from the Sacramento Superior Court are leading efforts to innovate improvements to the administration of justice in Family Law.

Judge James Mize of the Sacramento Superior Court has created the first "One Day Divorce" program in the state. Family Law attorneys and law students volunteer to help litigants through the one-day process. The first step is for litigants to sit down with one or more *pro tem* judges who discuss the terms of the couple's proposed agreement. The next step includes the actual filling out of the forms necessary to complete the divorce. This step is accomplished with help from law students and young attorney volunteers. Finally, if all the formal documents are completed and if the *pro tem* judges have approved the case for One Day Divorce treatment, the parties appear in the courtroom of Judge James Mize who will grant the appropriate relief. In 95% of all cases, the parties leave the courtroom with the final and formal documents in their hands and nothing else left to be done to obtain their judgment of dissolution or legal separation.

In California, 72% of family law litigants do not have lawyers. Simple divorces are complicated for self-represented litigants and, as a result, many cases languish in and congest the court system for months and even years. One of the biggest complaints about courts, and family courts in particular, is that the process takes too long to complete. The "One Day Divorce" program was created to help solve these problems.

To date, this program has only been offered as a pilot project for a limited number of litigants from court-based referrals. Since the pilot program began in December 2012, 25 cases have been successfully resolved.

Litigants participating in the program during the pilot phase had plenty to say about the experience. "I always had the feeling that the system was out to get me. Today the system was actually working for me," said Jason S., who made his first filing for divorce three years ago. Frustrated after having his paperwork rejected and not knowing how to proceed, he and his spouse discontinued the divorce process while living separate lives. Through the "One Day Divorce" program, he and his spouse spent one day in court getting the necessary assistance with their case, then left the same day with a signed judgment that meant their divorce was finalized.

Another participant, Aaron M. indicated "the lawyers made the process a lot more effective. No more time off work, back and forth to court. Just flat out GOT IT DONE."

John G. commented, "This class took away my stress of dealing with this by myself. Thank you guys very much."

Based on the success of the program thus far, Judge Mize has announced that the "One Day Divorce" program will "go live" on April 12, 2013 at the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse. Visit <http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/family/one-day-divorce.aspx> for more information on how you can be a part of this history-making program.