

CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION  
**ARTICLE 6 JUDICIAL**

SEC. 1. The judicial power of this State is vested in the Supreme Court, courts of appeal, and superior courts, all of which are courts of record.

SEC. 2. The Supreme Court consists of the Chief Justice of California and 6 associate justices. The Chief Justice may convene the court at any time. Concurrence of 4 judges present at the argument is necessary for a judgment.

An acting Chief Justice shall perform all functions of the Chief Justice when the Chief Justice is absent or unable to act. The Chief Justice or, if the Chief Justice fails to do so, the court shall select an associate justice as acting Chief Justice.

SEC. 3. The Legislature shall divide the State into districts each containing a court of appeal with one or more divisions. Each division consists of a presiding justice and 2 or more associate justices. It has the power of a court of appeal and shall conduct itself as a 3-judge court. Concurrence of 2 judges present at the argument is necessary for a judgment.

An acting presiding justice shall perform all functions of the presiding justice when the presiding justice is absent or unable to act. The presiding justice or, if the presiding justice fails to do so, the Chief Justice shall select an associate justice of that division as acting presiding justice.

SEC. 4. In each county there is a superior court of one or more judges. The Legislature shall prescribe the number of judges and provide for the officers and employees of each superior court. If the governing body of each affected county concurs, the Legislature may provide that one or more judges serve more than one superior court.

In each superior court there is an appellate division. The Chief Justice shall assign judges to the appellate division for specified terms pursuant to rules, not inconsistent with statute, adopted by the Judicial Council to promote the independence of the appellate division.

SEC. 6. (a) The Judicial Council consists of the Chief Justice and one other judge of the Supreme Court, three judges of courts of appeal, 10 judges of superior courts, two nonvoting court administrators, and any other nonvoting members as determined by the voting membership of the council, each appointed by the Chief Justice for a three-year term pursuant to procedures established by the council; four members of the State Bar appointed by its governing body for three-year terms; and one member of each house of the Legislature appointed as provided by the house.

(b) Council membership terminates if a member ceases to hold the position that qualified the member for appointment. A vacancy shall be filled by the appointing power for the remainder of the term.

(c) The council may appoint an Administrative Director of the Courts, who serves at its pleasure and performs functions delegated by the council or the Chief Justice, other than adopting rules of court administration, practice and procedure.

(d) To improve the administration of justice the council shall survey judicial business and make recommendations to the courts, make recommendations annually to the Governor and Legislature, adopt rules for court administration, practice and procedure, and perform other functions prescribed by statute. The rules adopted shall not be inconsistent with statute.

(e) The Chief Justice shall seek to expedite judicial business and to equalize the work of judges. The Chief Justice may provide for the assignment of any judge to another court but only with the judge's consent if the court is of lower jurisdiction. A retired judge who consents may be assigned to any court.

(f) Judges shall report to the council as the Chief Justice directs concerning the condition of judicial business in their courts. They shall cooperate with the council and hold court as assigned.

SEC. 7. The Commission on Judicial Appointments consists of the Chief Justice, the Attorney General, and the presiding justice of the court of appeal of the affected district or, if there are 2 or more presiding justices, the one who has presided longest or, when a nomination or appointment to the Supreme Court is to be considered, the presiding justice who has presided longest on any court of appeal.

SEC. 8. (a) The Commission on Judicial Performance consists of one judge of a court of appeal and two judges of superior courts, each appointed by the Supreme Court; two members of the State Bar of California who have practiced law in this State for 10 years, each appointed by the Governor; and six citizens who are not judges, retired judges, or members of the State Bar of California, two of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, two by the Senate Committee on Rules, and two by the Speaker of the Assembly. Except as provided in subdivisions (b) and (c), all terms are for four years. No member shall serve more than two four-year terms, or for more than a total of 10 years if appointed to fill a vacancy.

(b) Commission membership terminates if a member ceases to hold the position that qualified the member for appointment. A vacancy shall be filled by the appointing power for the remainder of the term. A member whose term has expired may continue to serve until the vacancy has been filled by the appointing power. Appointing powers may appoint members who are already serving on the commission prior to March 1, 1995, to a single two-year term, but may not appoint them to an additional term thereafter.

(c) To create staggered terms among the members of the Commission on Judicial Performance, the following members shall be appointed, as follows:

(1) Two members appointed by the Supreme Court to a term commencing March 1, 1995, shall each serve a term of two years and may be reappointed to one full term.

(2) One attorney appointed by the Governor to a term commencing March 1, 1995, shall serve a term of two years and may be reappointed to one full term.

(3) One citizen member appointed by the Governor to a term commencing March 1, 1995, shall serve a term of two years and may be reappointed to one full term.

(4) One member appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules to a term commencing March 1, 1995, shall serve a term of two years and may be reappointed to one full term.

(5) One member appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly to a term commencing March 1, 1995, shall serve a term of two years and may be reappointed to one full term.

(6) All other members shall be appointed to full four-year terms commencing March 1, 1995.

SEC. 9. The State Bar of California is a public corporation. Every person admitted and licensed to practice law in this State is and shall be a member of the State Bar except while holding office as a judge of a court of record.

SEC. 10. The Supreme Court, courts of appeal, superior courts, and their judges have original jurisdiction in habeas corpus proceedings. Those courts also have original jurisdiction in proceedings for extraordinary relief in the nature of mandamus, certiorari, and prohibition. The appellate division of the superior court has original jurisdiction in proceedings for extraordinary relief in the nature of mandamus, certiorari, and prohibition directed to the superior court in causes subject to its appellate jurisdiction.

Superior courts have original jurisdiction in all other causes.

The court may make any comment on the evidence and the testimony and credibility of any witness as in its opinion is necessary for the proper determination of the cause.

SEC. 11. (a) The Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction when judgment of death has been pronounced. With that exception courts of appeal have appellate jurisdiction when superior courts have original jurisdiction in causes of a type within the appellate jurisdiction of the courts of appeal on June 30, 1995, and in other causes prescribed by statute. When appellate jurisdiction in civil causes is determined by the amount in controversy, the Legislature may change the appellate jurisdiction of the courts of appeal by changing the jurisdictional amount in controversy.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision (a), the appellate division of the superior court has appellate jurisdiction in causes prescribed by statute.

(c) The Legislature may permit courts exercising appellate jurisdiction to take evidence and make findings of fact when jury trial is waived or not a matter of right.

SEC. 12. (a) The Supreme Court may, before decision, transfer to itself a cause in a court of appeal. It may, before decision, transfer a cause from itself to a court of appeal or from one court of appeal or division to another. The court to which a cause is transferred has jurisdiction.

(b) The Supreme Court may review the decision of a court of appeal in any cause.

(c) The Judicial Council shall provide, by rules of court, for the time and procedure for transfer and for review, including, among other things, provisions for the time and procedure for transfer with instructions, for review of all or part of a decision, and for remand as improvidently granted.

(d) This section shall not apply to an appeal involving a judgment of death.

SEC. 13. No judgment shall be set aside, or new trial granted, in any cause, on the ground of misdirection of the jury, or of the improper admission or rejection of evidence, or for any error as to any matter of pleading, or for any error as to any matter of procedure, unless, after an examination of the entire cause, including the evidence, the court shall be of the opinion that the error complained of has resulted in a miscarriage of justice.

SEC. 14. The Legislature shall provide for the prompt publication of such opinions of the Supreme Court and courts of appeal as the Supreme Court deems appropriate, and those opinions shall be available for publication by any person.

Decisions of the Supreme Court and courts of appeal that determine causes shall be in writing with reasons stated.

SEC. 15. A person is ineligible to be a judge of a court of record unless for 10 years immediately preceding selection, the person has been a member of the State Bar or served as a judge of a court of record in this State.

SEC. 16. (a) Judges of the Supreme Court shall be elected at large and judges of courts of appeal shall be elected in their districts at general elections at the same time and places as the Governor. Their terms are 12 years beginning the Monday after January 1 following their election, except that a judge elected to an unexpired term serves the remainder of the term. In creating a new court of appeal district or division the Legislature shall provide that the first elective terms are 4, 8, and 12 years.

(b) Judges of superior courts shall be elected in their counties at general elections except as otherwise necessary to meet the requirements of federal law. In the latter case the Legislature, by two-thirds vote of the membership of each house thereof, with the advice of judges within the affected court,

may provide for their election by the system prescribed in subdivision (d), or by any other arrangement. The Legislature may provide that an unopposed incumbent's name not appear on the ballot.

(c) Terms of judges of superior courts are six years beginning the Monday after January 1 following their election. A vacancy shall be filled by election to a full term at the next general election after the second January 1 following the vacancy, but the Governor shall appoint a person to fill the vacancy temporarily until the elected judge's term begins.

(d) (1) Within 30 days before August 16 preceding the expiration of the judge's term, a judge of the Supreme Court or a court of appeal may file a declaration of candidacy to succeed to the office presently held by the judge. If the declaration is not filed, the Governor before September 16 shall nominate a candidate. At the next general election, only the candidate so declared or nominated may appear on the ballot, which shall present the question whether the candidate shall be elected. The candidate shall be elected upon receiving a majority of the votes on the question. A candidate not elected may not be appointed to that court but later may be nominated and elected.

(2) The Governor shall fill vacancies in those courts by appointment. An appointee holds office until the Monday after January 1 following the first general election at which the appointee had the right to become a candidate or until an elected judge qualifies. A nomination or appointment by the Governor is effective when confirmed by the Commission on Judicial Appointments.

(3) Electors of a county, by majority of those voting and in a manner the Legislature shall provide, may make this system of selection applicable to judges of superior courts.

SEC. 17. A judge of a court of record may not practice law and during the term for which the judge was selected is ineligible for public employment or public office other than judicial employment or judicial office, except a judge of a court of record may accept a part-time teaching position that is outside the normal hours of his or her judicial position and that does not interfere with the regular performance of his or her judicial duties while holding office. A judge of a trial court of record may, however, become eligible for election to other public office by taking a leave of absence without pay prior to filing a declaration of candidacy. Acceptance of the public office is a resignation from the office of judge. A judicial officer may not receive fines or fees for personal use.

A judicial officer may not earn retirement service credit from a public teaching position while holding judicial office.

SEC. 18. (a) A judge is disqualified from acting as a judge, without loss of salary, while there is pending (1) an indictment or an information charging the judge in the United States with a crime punishable as a felony under California or federal law, or (2) a petition to the Supreme Court to review a determination by the Commission on Judicial Performance to remove or retire a judge.

(b) The Commission on Judicial Performance may disqualify a judge from acting as a judge, without loss of salary, upon notice of formal proceedings by the commission charging the judge with judicial misconduct or disability.

(c) The Commission on Judicial Performance shall suspend a judge from office without salary when in the United States the judge pleads guilty or no contest or is found guilty of a crime punishable as a felony under California or federal law or of any other crime that involves moral turpitude under that law. If the conviction is reversed, suspension terminates, and the judge shall be paid the salary for the judicial office held by the judge for the period of suspension. If the judge is suspended and the conviction becomes final, the Commission on Judicial Performance shall remove the judge from office.

(d) Except as provided in subdivision (f), the Commission on Judicial Performance may (1) retire a judge for disability that seriously interferes with the performance of the judge's duties and is or is likely to become permanent, or (2) censure a judge or former judge or remove a judge for action occurring not more than 6 years prior to the commencement of the judge's current term or of the former judge's last term that constitutes willful misconduct in office, persistent failure or inability to perform the judge's duties, habitual intemperance in the use of intoxicants or drugs, or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or (3) publicly or privately admonish a judge or former judge found to have engaged in an improper action or dereliction of duty. The commission may also bar a former judge who has been censured from receiving an assignment, appointment, or reference of work from any California state court. Upon petition by the judge or former judge, the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant review of a determination by the commission to retire, remove, censure, admonish, or disqualify pursuant to subdivision (b) a judge or former judge. When the Supreme Court reviews a determination of the commission, it may make an independent review of the

record. If the Supreme Court has not acted within 120 days after granting the petition, the decision of the commission shall be final.

(e) A judge retired by the commission shall be considered to have retired voluntarily. A judge removed by the commission is ineligible for judicial office, including receiving an assignment, appointment, or reference of work from any California state court, and pending further order of the court is suspended from practicing law in this State. The State Bar may institute appropriate attorney disciplinary proceedings against any judge who retires or resigns from office with judicial disciplinary charges pending.

(f) A determination by the Commission on Judicial Performance to admonish or censure a judge or former judge of the Supreme Court or remove or retire a judge of the Supreme Court shall be reviewed by a tribunal of 7 court of appeal judges selected by lot.

(g) No court, except the Supreme Court, shall have jurisdiction in a civil action or other legal proceeding of any sort brought against the commission by a judge. Any request for injunctive relief or other provisional remedy shall be granted or denied within 90 days of the filing of the request for relief. A failure to comply with the time requirements of this section does not affect the validity of commission proceedings.

(h) Members of the commission, the commission staff, and the examiners and investigators employed by the commission shall be absolutely immune from suit for all conduct at any time in the course of their official duties. No civil action may be maintained against a person, or adverse employment action taken against a person, by any employer, public or private, based on statements presented by the person to the commission.

(i) The Commission on Judicial Performance shall make rules implementing this section, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The commission shall make rules for the investigation of judges. The commission may provide for the confidentiality of complaints to and investigations by the commission.

(2) The commission shall make rules for formal proceedings against judges when there is cause to believe there is a disability or wrongdoing within the meaning of subdivision (d).

(j) When the commission institutes formal proceedings, the notice of charges, the answer, and all subsequent papers and proceedings shall be open to the public for all formal proceedings instituted after February 28, 1995.

(k) The commission may make explanatory statements.

(l) The budget of the commission shall be separate from the budget of any other state agency or court.



(m) The Supreme Court shall make rules for the conduct of judges, both on and off the bench, and for judicial candidates in the conduct of their campaigns. These rules shall be referred to as the Code of Judicial Ethics.

SEC. 18.1. The Commission on Judicial Performance shall exercise discretionary jurisdiction with regard to the oversight and discipline of subordinate judicial officers, according to the same standards, and subject to review upon petition to the Supreme Court, as specified in Section 18.

No person who has been found unfit to serve as a subordinate judicial officer after a hearing before the Commission on Judicial Performance shall have the requisite status to serve as a subordinate judicial officer.

This section does not diminish or eliminate the responsibility of a court to exercise initial jurisdiction to discipline or dismiss a subordinate judicial officer as its employee.

SEC. 18.5. (a) Upon request, the Commission on Judicial Performance shall provide to the Governor of any State of the Union the text of any private admonishment, advisory letter, or other disciplinary action together with any information that the Commission on Judicial Performance deems necessary to a full understanding of the commission's action, with respect to any applicant whom the Governor of any State of the Union indicates is under consideration for any judicial appointment.

(b) Upon request, the Commission on Judicial Performance shall provide the President of the United States the text of any private admonishment, advisory letter, or other disciplinary action together with any information that the Commission on Judicial Performance deems necessary to a full understanding of the commission's action, with respect to any applicant whom the President indicates is under consideration for any federal judicial appointment.

(c) Upon request, the Commission on Judicial Performance shall provide the Commission on Judicial Appointments the text of any private admonishment, advisory letter, or other disciplinary action together with any information that the Commission on Judicial Performance deems necessary to a full understanding of the commission action, with respect to any applicant whom the Commission on Judicial Appointments indicates is under consideration for any judicial appointment.

(d) All information released under this section shall remain confidential and privileged.

(e) Notwithstanding subdivision (d), any information released pursuant to this section shall also be provided to the applicant about whom the information was requested.

(f) "Private admonishment" refers to a disciplinary action against a judge by the Commission on Judicial Performance as authorized by subdivision (c) of Section 18 of **Article VI**, as amended November 8, 1988.

SEC. 19. The Legislature shall prescribe compensation for judges of courts of record.

A judge of a court of record may not receive the salary for the judicial office held by the judge while any cause before the judge remains pending and undetermined for 90 days after it has been submitted for decision.

SEC. 20. The Legislature shall provide for retirement, with reasonable allowance, of judges of courts of record for age or disability.

SEC. 21. On stipulation of the parties litigant the court may order a cause to be tried by a temporary judge who is a member of the State Bar, sworn and empowered to act until final determination of the cause.

SEC. 22. The Legislature may provide for the appointment by trial courts of record of officers such as commissioners to perform subordinate judicial duties.

SEC. 23. (a) The purpose of the amendments to Sections 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 16, of this **article**, and the amendments to Section 16 of **Article I**, approved at the June 2, 1998, primary election is to permit the Legislature to provide for the abolition of the municipal courts and unify their operations within the superior courts. Notwithstanding Section 8 of **Article IV**, the implementation of, and orderly transition under, the provisions of the measure adding this section may include urgency statutes that create or abolish offices or change the salaries, terms, or duties of offices, or grant franchises or special privileges, or create vested rights or interests, where otherwise permitted under this Constitution.

(b) When the superior and municipal courts within a county are unified, the judgeships in each municipal court in that county are abolished and the previously selected municipal court judges shall become judges of the superior court in that county. The term of office of a previously selected municipal court judge is not affected by taking office as a judge of the superior court. The 10-year membership or service requirement of Section 15 does not apply to a previously selected municipal court judge. Pursuant to Section 6, the Judicial Council may prescribe appropriate education and training for judges with regard to trial court unification.

(c) Except as provided by statute to the contrary, in any county in which the superior and municipal courts become unified, the following shall occur automatically in each preexisting superior and municipal court:

(1) Previously selected officers, employees, and other personnel who serve the court become the officers and employees of the superior court.

(2) Preexisting court locations are retained as superior court locations.

(3) Preexisting court records become records of the superior court.

(4) Pending actions, trials, proceedings, and other business of the court become pending in the superior court under the procedures previously applicable to the matters in the court in which the matters were pending.

(5) Matters of a type previously within the appellate jurisdiction of the superior court remain within the jurisdiction of the appellate division of the superior court.

(6) Matters of a type previously subject to rehearing by a superior court judge remain subject to rehearing by a superior court judge, other than the judge who originally heard the matter.

(7) Penal Code procedures that necessitate superior court review of, or action based on, a ruling or order by a municipal court judge shall be performed by a superior court judge other than the judge who originally made the ruling or order.

(d) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2007, and as of that date is repealed.