



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## California Bench Growing More Diverse, Annual Survey Indicates

SAN FRANCISCO—Diversity on the California bench is increasing gradually along every measure, according to a legislatively mandated annual report released today by the California Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The AOC released [demographic data](#) on the ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation of California state judges and justices.

Government Code section 12011.5(n), requires the AOC to collect and release aggregate demographic data on California state judges and justices by March 1 every year. This is the seventh year that the information has been collected and released. Responding to the questionnaire is entirely voluntary for judges.

The current data reflects the demographic makeup of the California bench as of December 31, 2012. The total number of justices and judges included in this year's report decreased slightly compared to the year before, from 1,677 in 2011 to 1,656 in 2012.

Women now represent 31.3 percent of the judiciary, compared to 27.1 percent in 2006, continuing an upward trend over the past seven years. The data also show increases over the past seven years in the percentage of justices and judges reported in the following race and ethnicity categories:

- American Indian or Alaska Native—0.4 percent in 2012 compared to 0.1 percent in 2006;
- Asian—5.8 percent in 2012 compared to 4.4 percent in 2006;
- Black or African American—6.1 percent in 2012 compared to 4.4 percent in 2006;
- Hispanic or Latino—8.3 percent in 2012 compared to 6.3 percent in 2006;
- Pacific Islander—0.2 percent in 2012 compared to 0.1 percent in 2006;
- White—71.4 percent in 2012 compared to 70.1 percent in 2006;
- Some Other Race—1.1 percent in 2012 compared to 0.2 percent in 2006.

These changes reflect judicial retirements and other departures from the bench, new judicial appointments, and an increase in the number of trial court judges who have provided race/ethnicity information.

This is the second year that the study includes data on gender identity and sexual orientation, as required by Senate Bill 182 (Corbett), which was passed by the Legislature and signed into law

by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2011. The bill was sponsored by Equality California. Among the justices and judges who responded, 61 percent chose to provide information about gender identity/sexual orientation, with the following percentages reported: (more than one selection was allowed):

- Heterosexual, 58.6 percent;
- Lesbian, 1.1 percent;
- Gay, 1.1 percent;
- Bisexual, 0 percent; and
- Transgender, 0.6 percent.

Increasing the diversity of California's judicial officers to reflect the rich diversity of California's populace continues to be a key goal of the Judicial Council of California.

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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.*