



Supreme Court of California
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supreme Court to welcome C.K. McClatchy High School students to oral arguments

Visit part of month-long focus on civics by Chief Justice

As part of the California Supreme Court's ongoing outreach and education efforts, the court will welcome more than 100 students and teachers from Sacramento's C.K. McClatchy High School's Law and Public Policy Academy to hear the two morning cases on the court's February 6, 2013 oral argument calendar at its courtroom in San Francisco.

The visit is part of a month-long program by Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye to raise awareness about the importance of civics education to our society and to focus attention on the need for civic learning programs in California. "The current fiscal crisis has highlighted gaps in awareness of, and understanding about, our judicial branch and its role in state government. There is a critical need for an engaged citizenry to make fully-informed choices about the future path of our democracy" said Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye. "I am advocating for improved civics education so that our citizens understand that the strength of our democratic institutions relies on the public's understanding of and participation in those institutions."

The Law and Public Policy Academy at C.K. McClatchy High School (the Chief Justice's alma mater) was created two years ago. Students take core classes together and supplement their schedules with elective courses. The goal of the program is to provide experiences engaging to students and a rich curriculum centered around the law, augmented with guest speakers and field trips. Research has shown academy-style learning promotes academic success, produces more high school graduates, and leads more students to pursue higher education.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the kids," said Bennae Dillingham, Coordinator of the Law and Public Policy Academy. "Being in the courtroom during the oral arguments will allow them to learn firsthand about the important work of the Supreme Court and expose them to the broad range of careers within the field of law."

The students will attend the morning oral argument session and will hear two cases, *People v. Gonzales (Ramiro)* (Case No. S191240) and *People v. McCullough (Antoine)* (Case No. S192513). “The cases being heard have been selected to be of general interest to students and relevant to their studies in the Law and Public Policy Academy,” said Mr. Frank McGuire, Clerk/Administrator of the Supreme Court. “Copies of the legal briefs and case summaries were provided to the students in advance to enable them to prepare for the oral arguments and make their visit more meaningful.”

Wednesday’s visit will follow a special oral argument session at the University of San Francisco School of Law on February 5 where law students will be joined by high school students from Balboa High School Law Academy and Thurgood Marshall High School in San Francisco. The Chief Justice will follow up the visit by C. K. McClatchy students to the Supreme Court with a return visit to their school in Sacramento on February 21. During February she will also visit Sutter Middle School in Sacramento, University of La Verne Law School in Ontario, and Balboa High School in San Francisco.

The month of outreach on civics education will culminate with the *Civic Learning California Summit: Making Democracy Work* in Sacramento on February 28, where the Chief Justice will be joined by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor (Ret.), Secretary of State Debra Bowen, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, and others interested in civic learning.

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The Supreme Court of California is the state's highest court and its decisions are binding on all other California state courts. The court's primary role is to decide matters of statewide importance and to maintain uniformity in the law throughout California by reviewing matters from the six districts of the California Courts of Appeal and the fifty-eight county superior courts (the trial courts). Among its other duties, the court also decides all capital appeals and related matters and reviews both attorney and judicial disciplinary matters.