



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: [Lynn Holton](mailto:Lynn.Holton@courts.ca.gov), Public Information Officer, 415-865-7726
[Philip Carrizosa](mailto:Philip.Carrizosa@courts.ca.gov), 415-865-8044

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye Brings 'Fresh Approach' to California Courts

First State of the Judiciary Address to Legislature

SACRAMENTO—In her inaugural “State of Judiciary Address,” Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye described to a joint session of the state Legislature the “fresh approach to the governance” of the judicial branch that she has taken during her first year in office.

“That means a new and different leadership, greater transparency and greater accountability, collaboration, and communication.” she said.

Speaking without notes, the state’s 28th Chief Justice said that the first year of her tenure—which began on January 3, 2011—was marked by the single largest budget reduction ever to the judiciary. At the same, the judiciary has seen a 20 percent increase in court filing during the past decade.

“Now more than ever, after four years of successive cuts to the judicial branch,” she said, the branch has become “a safety net for a democratic and civil society. Yet judges do not get to choose the kinds or types of cases we hear. And the cruel irony is that the forces that are driving these cuts are also driving citizens more and more for help in evictions, debt collection, and modifications of child support orders.”

The Chief Justice said she began her term surveying trial court judges about branch governance and [appointing a committee](#) to examine the roles and responsibilities of the Administrative Office of the Courts. She appointed a judicial committee to [oversee the court construction program](#), which has both reaffirmed the need of the program and has cancelled or modified projects “where they make sense.” She also thanked the Legislature for helping inform judicial branch decisions on California Court Case Managements System. She added that she was in office only a few weeks before a state audit filed a report on CCMS. She placed a [judicial oversight committee](#) in charge of the project and the Judicial Council will discuss its options regarding CCMS at its next meeting on March 27. “We know now that we have a system that works but we have a changed fiscal reality.”

The Chief Justice made it clear that her present agenda is to adequately fund the judicial branch, but the current difficulties will not deter her from focusing on the next generation of Californians. When children are suspended or drop out from high school, she said, studies show that they are at a greater risk of entering the juvenile justice system and then the adult prison

(more)

system. The judicial system can't wait until that happens, she said, and needs to recognize this "looming problem" and create the "restorative partnerships" needed to return these children to school.

A copy of the speech, as prepared, can be found [here](#). A video of the speech will be posted on the California Courts [youtube channel](#).

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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.