

***Judicial Branch Special Hearing:
“Perspectives from Court Users and Stakeholders
on Access to Justice”***

*Judicial Council of California in co-sponsorship with
Hon. Joseph Dunn, Chair of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,
Hon. Dave Jones, Chair of the Assembly Committee on Judiciary, and
the State Bar of California*

Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial Council Conference Center
San Francisco, California
Thursday, April 20, 2006
1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

WELCOMING REMARKS

Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of California and Chair of the Judicial Council

INTRODUCTION

Video: “Access to Our Courts”

Presentation by the Hon. Laurie D. Zelon, Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal,
Second Appellate District

PANEL 1

LANGUAGE ACCESS AND INTERPRETER SERVICES

- Court users and legal services providers’ perspectives on the language access and interpreter services they need to effectively use the courts
- Other challenges to the courts and the public posed by language barriers.
- AOC Court Interpreters Program managers, local court administrators, and non-interpreter court staff perspectives on the courts’ ability to provide the language capabilities needed to effectively assist the public

PANEL 2

OVERCOMING OTHER BARRIERS TO JUSTICE

- How do cultural beliefs and/or customs pose barriers to immigrant groups which are unfamiliar with the courts?
- What initiatives would be helpful to address the needs of immigrant populations?
- How are court users affected by the lack of adequate child waiting rooms in the courts?

BREAK

PANEL 3**CONSEQUENCES OF INADEQUATE JUDICIAL RESOURCES AND DEFICIENT COURT FACILITIES**

- How do the need for new judgeships, need for diversity in judicial appointments, and deficient court facilities affect court users' trust and confidence in the courts?
- What specific challenges do courts with too few judges face in meeting the needs of their communities?
- How do inadequate facilities specifically impede access to justice?
- What steps can be taken to attract and retain qualified, diverse applicants for judicial positions and how can the Judicial Council assist in that effort?

PANEL 4**ACCESS TO SELF-HELP SERVICES**

- What do court users see as their priorities for self-help services?
- What service level increases can be accomplished given existing resources?
- What factors will determine how service level increases should be prioritized and implemented?

PANEL 5**TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE CALIFORNIA COURTS**

- What can the courts do to ensure that the public understands what is going to or has taken place in court proceedings?
- What initiatives could the Judicial Council/courts undertake to increase the public's knowledge about their rights and how to effectively use the courts?
- How can the courts collaborate with local communities to improve access to courts?
- How can the Judicial Council help courts measure and convey their efficiency, effectiveness, and procedural fairness to the public? What information does the public want and/or need?

PUBLIC TESTIMONY**CLOSING REMARKS**

Hon. Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of California and Chair of the Judicial Council

For more information, please contact Donna Hershkowitz in the AOC's Office of Governmental Affairs at (916) 323-3121.