

California's Chief Justice called an emergency session of the Judicial Council to grapple with Governor Brown's proposed budget cuts to the Judicial Branch. The state's Department of Finance director said the governor wants a \$544 million dollar reduction for fiscal year 2012-13. That's on top of four consecutive years of cuts totaling \$653 million.

Hon. Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, Chief Justice of California *"This changeover to this funding structure is startling, harsh, immediate and shocking."*

Hon. Laurie Earl, Superior Court of California, County of Sacramento *"The magnitude of the governor's proposal is so huge that I'm not sure we've truly digested it yet. One thing I do know is it will be impossible for us to accomplish this massive reduction in less than a year let alone 45 days."*

Of the \$544 million reduction, \$300 million would come from trial court reserves, to be used for daily court operations. And going forward, the reserve system would be restructured.

Ana Matosantos, Director, California Department of Finance *"We should have a state level reserve that is managed by the Council that is available to the local trial courts based on rules that are uniformly applied across the State."*

The proposed budget also relies on \$240 million saved by delaying most of the 38 statewide court construction projects. Court leaders told council members: they've done the best they could with one time fixes and reallocation of resources. But with this proposed budget, solutions now will be draconian, painful, and will seriously threaten access to justice for Californians. Justice will be expensive and hard to get.

Hon. David Rubin, Judicial Council of California *"There are lots of people in need and for them to get in front of us now is taking longer and longer and it's, there's a saying: justice delayed is justice denied."*

Hon. Mary Ann O'Malley, Judicial Council of California *"Somebody who's been wronged now, they just won't bring their matter to court."*

Hon. Douglas P. Miller, Judicial Council *"You're going to have fewer courtrooms, you're going to have fewer staff, you're going to have fewer court reporters, you're going to have fewer interpreters, you're going to look at collaborative courts and whether or not you're going to be able to maintain those, so the court's still going to have to do the business, because the business doesn't go away, but their ability to do that in a manner that provides access in a reasonable amount of time, it's going to change substantially."*

Hon. Robert Trentacosta, Superior Court of California, County of San Diego *"If a lack of adequate funding continues we will see a systematic dismantling of the justice system that has been a model in our country."*

After the emergency session, the Chief Justice announced the names of judicial branch leaders who'll serve on an ad hoc group to lead budget negotiations on the proposals.

Hon. Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, Chief Justice of California *“This will test not only our abilities and experience, but also our characters. And now more than ever is a time for unity about the judicial branch.”*

For more details on the ad hoc group, the meeting and background links, go to the Judicial Council's website. I'm Leanne Kozak reporting from Sacramento for California Courts News.