



Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Judicial Council Members Hear Budget Solutions at Public Meeting

Council OKs Suspension of CCMS Due Diligence Process

San Francisco—At its first meeting of the year, Judicial Council members heard a report on the Governor’s judicial branch budget for fiscal year 2012–2013 and the severe impact that four years of budget cuts are having on the public, which will only increase unless part of the General Fund budget is restored.

“The judicial branch budget is a very small part of the state budget, yet the courts have been pushed to the wall,” declared Presiding Judge David Rosenberg, chair of the council’s Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee. “Every judge is a constitutional officer who is entitled to a courtroom and staff to do that job, yet our branch has been pushed to the point where it is sometimes difficult to function. Enough is enough.” Judge Rosenberg was one of several council members who expressed concern over the deep cuts in public services that are resulting from ongoing budget reductions.

Over the past four fiscal years, the judicial branch has experienced a cumulative ongoing budget reduction of \$653 million. The General Fund portion of the budget has been cut by nearly 25 percent during that time. The Governor’s judicial branch budget for fiscal year 2012–2013 does not contain any new reductions, and it has authorized \$50 million in new fee revenue. If the Governor’s plan for new taxes is not approved in the November 2012 election, an automatic budget cut of \$125 million will be triggered.

At a presentation, several budget solutions were outlined to deal with long-term term impacts of the funding shortage. Those solutions include advocating for restoration of some part of the General Fund budget, seeking an increase in various civil fees, and seeking statutory changes to allow further efficiencies in court operations.

Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, chair of the council, thanked the State Bar, the Bench Bar Coalition, and the Open Courts Coalition, for their work to protect and maintain critical court services for the public. The report was an informational item on the council’s agenda, so no action was taken.

New Judicial Council Member Takes Oath

In other actions, Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye administered the oath of office to a new council member—Judge Emilie H. Elias, of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. Judge Elias, who began her term last week, fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Burt Pines, also from the Superior Court of Los Angeles County. Her term ends September 14, 2014.

Appointed to the Los Angeles trial court in 2000 after serving as a commissioner, Judge Elias is the Supervising Judge of the Complex Civil Litigation Panel. In that position, she presides over complex civil cases, including all law and motion matters, settlements, and trials.

Other Meeting Actions

CCMS Due Diligence Process: The council approved a recommendation by two council committees to suspend the council's due diligence process during which the council explored a collaboration with the Chan Soon-Shiong Family Foundation and the State Bar of California on deploying the California Court Case Management System (CCMS) and other technology activities. The two committees that made the recommendation were the Executive and Planning Committee and the California Court Case Management Internal Committee.

In a report to the council, Justice Douglas Miller, chair of the Executive and Planning Committee, and Judge James Herman, chair of the council's CCMS Internal Committee, said that by late December 2011, all the parties had reached the conclusion that a collaborative relationship was too complex to pursue at this time.

Contract Report: The council approved the first semiannual Judicial Branch report detailing contract information for contract payments and amendments made by judicial branch entities during the period of October 1, 2011 through December 31, 2011. The report will be submitted to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the State Auditor, consistent with the requirements of Public Contract Code section 19209.

Consent Agenda: The council approved ten items on its consent agenda, most concerning changes to rules and forms as required by recently enacted legislation or otherwise recommended by council advisory committees. Also approved was a report on the allocation and disbursement to court and county collections programs of \$500,000 received from the California State Department of Finance to offset costs of the statewide amnesty program.

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.