



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Online Ethics Course for Judicial Candidates Launches

Course is mandatory for all judicial candidates

SAN FRANCISCO—California judges and lawyers running for judicial office must take a new online judicial ethics course within 60 days of filing for office, creating a campaign committee, or receiving a campaign contribution. The [mandatory judicial ethics course](#) for judicial candidates went online this week.

The course was developed by a working group of justices, judges, and lawyers after the [Supreme Court adopted the mandatory rule](#)—along with other changes to the California Code of Judicial Ethics—almost a year ago.

“The Supreme Court changed the rules to promote and enhance public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary and to provide guidance on the ethical obligations and responsibilities of those running for judicial office,” said Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye. “I am particularly pleased with the collaboration that produced this course—an effort that involved the California Judges Association, the Supreme Court Advisory Committee on the Code of Judicial Ethics, and the State Bar of California, as well as crucial support and expertise provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts’ Center for Judiciary Education and Research.”

The chair of the working group, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Paul A. Bacigalupo, said the course is designed to give candidates a practical understanding of judicial canons and laws, rules, and regulations. The course will help candidates run a campaign consistent with the Code of Judicial Ethics, and in the case of lawyers who are judicial candidates, with the Rules of Professional Conduct that govern lawyers. “The course illustrates how judicial campaigns are fundamentally different from political races,” said Judge Bacigalupo. “For example, judicial candidates may be disciplined by the Commission for Judicial Performance for failing to adequately supervise campaign staff or disclose campaign contributions.”

Both the course and the rule that made it mandatory for all judicial candidates were recommendations made by the [Commission for Impartial Courts](#), which was created in 2007 by then Chief Justice Ronald M. George. “The commission rightly pointed out that California has one of the best judicial selection systems in the country,” said Judge Bacigalupo. “But, like

anything else, it could always use improvement, and the commission made recommendations to do just that. This new rule and the online course will help judicial candidates adhere to the highest ethical standards and, I hope, demonstrate to others that judges and justices strive to ensure fairness and impartiality for all parties and persons using the courts.”

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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.