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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supreme Court Seeks Comment on Possible Changes to Ethics Opinions Committee Rule

Proposed rule would change term limits for CJEO members, chair, and vice-chair

SAN FRANCISCO—The Supreme Court of California announced today that it has decided to seek public comment on a possible amendment to rule 9.80 of the California Rules of Court, which governs the Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions (CJEO). Rule 9.80 specifies the terms and term limits for the members and leaders of CJEO, who are appointed by the Supreme Court. The proposed amendments would revise rule [9.80](#) to (1) make CJEO members generally eligible to serve a third four-year term on the committee in the event the court wishes to reappoint them; (2) make initial CJEO members eligible to serve a second four-year term in the event the court wishes to reappoint them; (3) double the term of the chair from two years to four years, plus make the chair eligible to serve a third term in the event the court wishes to reappoint the chair; and (4) provide terms and term limits for the vice-chair that match those of the chair.

The CJEO advises the judiciary and the public on proper conduct under the Code of Judicial Ethics in [published judicial ethics opinions](#). According to Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye, the justices of the Supreme Court greatly appreciate the work of CJEO “in providing guidance and advice to California’s judiciary. We have a strong Code of Judicial Ethics and a growing resource of topic-based ethics opinions to guide judicial officers and enhance public trust and confidence in the judicial branch.”

Since CJEO was established in 2010, the Supreme Court has had to replace one-fourth of the initial members due to resignation or replacement. Such non-term-limit membership departures likely will continue to happen alongside the changes that will regularly occur when membership terms formally end. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to provide the Supreme Court with authority to allow for greater continuity and stability on the committee while retaining the court’s discretion to make regular membership and leadership changes.

An invitation to comment on the proposed amendments is available on the California Courts website's [Invitations to Comment](#) page, under the "Supreme Court" heading, and on the [Supreme Court Committees](#) page, under the "Supreme Court Committee on Judicial Ethics Opinions" heading. More information on the committee and its background is available on the [CJEO website](#). The deadline for submitting public comments on the possible rule changes is Wednesday, November 18, 2015.

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The Supreme Court of California is the state's highest court and its decisions are binding on all other California state courts. The court's primary role is to decide matters of statewide importance and to maintain uniformity in the law throughout California by reviewing matters from the six districts of the California Courts of Appeal and the fifty-eight county superior courts (the trial courts). Among its other duties, the court also decides all capital appeals and related matters and reviews both attorney and judicial disciplinary matters.