By the Numbers: California’s Judicial Diversity and Sources

California’s judiciary needs to reflect the state’s rich diversity, including racial/ethnic diversity. Underrepresentation remains a challenge along all points of the pathway to the bench.

While people of color represent nearly two-thirds of California’s population, they are underrepresented in law school, as attorneys, and judges.

People of color make up 47% of California’s law students in 2018.

Of the approximate 192,000 active attorneys in California in 2017, fewer than 1 in 5 identify as a person of color.

Although the state bench does not yet reflect the population it serves, it has grown considerably more diverse in recent years. Of the 644 judges Governor Brown appointed from 2011–2019, nearly 40% identified as non-white, 44% were women, and 6% identified as LGBT.

References:
2. Law student ethnicity data: Estimates based on numbers reported by California ABA approved law schools on the 2018 ABA Standard 509 Information Report.
3. Active attorney ethnicity data: Estimates based on 2017 numbers from the State Bar’s Attorney Regulation & Consumer Resources data. White proportion is inferred by deducting the total minority population from 100%.
4. Attorney ethnicity, women, LGBT, disabilities, and veteran’s data: Estimates based on 2018 numbers from the Judicial Council’s Justice’s and Judge’s demographic data. [__].
5. Governor Brown’s recent appointment data: California Courts Newsroom press release, 2019. [__].
6. California LGBT data: Estimate based on 2017 numbers from Gallup Poll reported by UCLA’s School of Law Williams Institute.
7. California veteran’s data: Reported by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2017. [__].