



NEWS RELEASE

**Los Angeles Superior Court
Public Information Office**

Website: www.lasuperiorcourt.org

E-mail Address: PublicInfo@LASuperiorcourt.org

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L.A. SUPERIOR COURT ELIMINATES JOBS; HUNDREDS OF EMPLOYEES AFFECTED

Tomorrow, Friday, June 14, 2013, reductions in state financial support for the California judicial branch force the Court to eliminate 511 budgeted positions. As a result, 539 Los Angeles Superior Court employees will be affected, including 177 employees who will be laid off.

A budget committee of the California legislature agreed Monday evening to provide \$60 million in new funding to the state trial courts; close to \$20 million of that funding may be provided to the Los Angeles Superior Court. Nevertheless, even if the additional funds are provided, the amount is insufficient to avoid the contraction of court size and services necessitated by repeated, cumulative budget cuts since 2008. As Presiding Judge David S. Wesley stated, the legislative action is "too little, too late, to stop the layoffs, or the reduction in access to justice that state funding cuts have produced, although they give us hope that we will not have to make further cuts to staff or services in the foreseeable future."

Decreases in state support for the California trial courts now total \$725 million annually. Net of mitigations (such as increased fees for court users imposed by the legislature), and including unfunded cost increases, the Los Angeles Superior Court must manage a structural budget deficit of \$195 million. Previous actions, including layoffs in 2010 and 2012, hiring freezes, cuts in supplies and other cost-saving measures, have reduced the Court's annual spending by \$110 million.

Friday's actions will reduce spending by another \$56 million.

"Assuming that Governor Brown signs into law the budget increase proposed for the trial courts, our Court's share will barely cover the remainder of our structural deficit. For the first time since the budget crisis began, we will have finally resolved our structural deficit," said Wesley.

More-More-More

As of July 1, 2013, the Court will have eliminated 30% of its budgeted staff positions since 2002 – a 24% reduction since the state budget crisis began in 2008.

To manage the Court after Friday's staffing reductions, the Court has implemented a consolidation plan that has resulted in:

- Closure of eight courthouses: Pomona North, Whittier, Huntington Park, Beacon Street, San Pedro, Kenyon Juvenile, West Los Angeles and Malibu;
- Significant reductions in court services at the Beverly Hills and Catalina courthouses;
- Consolidation of personal injury, collections, small claims, probate, unlawful detainer and traffic cases in fewer courthouse locations;
- Elimination of the remaining part-time court reporters in civil courts;
- Elimination of all full-time referee positions in the juvenile courts and reduction of juvenile dependency mediation services; and
- Elimination of the Court-managed Alternative Dispute Resolution unit.

"We have reached the new normal," said Wesley. "And there is nothing to like about it."

"When the Municipal and Superior Courts unified, our vision was to be the largest neighborhood court and to maintain a presence in many communities throughout LA County," said Wesley. "This is not the neighborhood court we worked so hard to build. It is not our vision for access to justice. But this is the Court that the state is willing and able to support. We will be using our collective energy as a court to provide access to justice in every case type within the limits of the resources we have been provided."

To save \$56 million annually, the Court is eliminating 511 budgeted positions. The elimination will have the following effects on court employees:

- 177 people will lose their jobs;
- 139 people will be demoted to previously held positions; those demotions will, in turn, bring about reductions in pay for those employees;
- 223 employees will keep their jobs with the Court, but will be reassigned to new locations on Monday, June 17.

In all, 539 people are being impacted: one in seven employees. Notices to affected employees are being hand-delivered tomorrow.

"It is a particular irony that many of the people being impacted have been working long and hard to restructure the Court over these past few months," noted Assistant

Presiding Judge Carolyn B. Kuhl. “They and all our employees have done the impossible: moving hundreds of thousands of case files, and dismantling and rebuilding large parts of our Court. I admire their commitment to serving the public. It has not wavered.”