



The Capitol Connection

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS • OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Legislative Calendar

August 17

Legislature reconvenes from Summer Recess.

September 11

Last day of the legislative session.

NEW BUDGET SPREADS THE PAIN: JUDICIAL BRANCH SEES \$503 MILLION IN REDUCTIONS

On July 24, 2009, the Legislature passed a package of bills to revise the enacted budget for fiscal year 2009-2010. The budget revision closes a \$24.1 billion budget shortfall and solves the state's current cash crisis.

The enacted budget package relied heavily on program reductions and included no new taxes. In total, the package reduced state services and programs by \$16.1 billion. Education received the largest reduction: \$6.5 billion for K-14 schools and \$2 billion for the University of California and California State University Systems. Health and human services programs were cut by \$3.4 billion, with significant decreases in In-Home Supportive

Services, CalWORKs and Medi-Cal. State employees were also impacted with the imposition of three furlough days per month, saving the state \$1.3 billion.

The judicial branch suffered a significant loss of General Fund support. In total, the Legislature adopted \$503 million in reductions to the judicial branch budget for fiscal year 2009-2010. Reductions included \$71.4 million in funding for new judgeships; \$32.5 million to fund the annual state appropriations limit (SAL) adjustment; \$17.4 million in funding to implement the Omnibus Conservatorship and Guardianship Act of 2006; and \$382.1

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AMMIANO CHAIRS BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY ISSUES

Assembly Member Tom Ammiano (D-San Francisco) was recently named chair of Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on State Administration. The subcommittee's jurisdiction includes the judicial branch, the Legislature, and constitutional offices, among others.

Ammiano serves as the vice-chair of the Assembly Human Services Committee, and also sits on the appropriations, budget, education, health, public safety, and rules standing committees.

Elected to the State Assembly in November 2008, Assembly Member Ammiano represents the 13th

District, which encompasses the eastern portion of San Francisco. Prior to his election to the Legislature, he had served the city for nearly three decades as a teacher, civil rights leader, educator, school board member, and city and county supervisor.



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JUDICIAL COUNCIL-SPONSORED LEGISLATION

In 2009, the Judicial Council sponsored legislation on the following judicial branch priorities:

CIVIL & SMALL CLAIMS

AB 5 (Evans), as enacted. Civil discovery: Electronic Discovery Act.

This bill, co-sponsored by the Judicial Council, the Consumer Attorneys of California, and the California Defense Counsel, enacts the Electronic Discovery Act of 2009. The bill adds definitions of “electronic” and “electronically stored information” to the Civil Discovery Act and authorizes the discovery of electronically stored information. In addition, the bill allows a party to specify the form in which electronically stored information is to be produced, and if no form is specified, the responding party must produce the information in the form in which it is ordinarily maintained or in a form that is reasonably usable. The bill further establishes procedures for motions to compel and motions for protective orders relating to the discovery of electronically stored information, as well as a procedure for handling disputes over the production of electronically stored information. **Status:** Signed into law. The legislation took effect on June 29, 2009. Statutes of 2009, ch. 5. *For more information contact Daniel Pone at daniel.pone@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.*

COURT FACILITIES

SB 12 (Second Extraordinary Session, Steinberg). Court facilities continuous appropriation.

Senate Bill 1407 ([Perata], Stats. 2008, ch. 311) set the framework for the issuance of \$5 billion in revenue (non-General Fund) bonds to support the construction and renovation of 41 seriously deficient courthouses throughout the state. However, the bill did not contain an appropriation. On February 20, 2009, the Governor signed SBX2 12 providing a continuous appropriation to allow the Judicial Council to expend funds accrued under SB 1407 for site acquisition and preliminary design plans for all 41 projects. **Status:** Signed into law. The legislation took effect on May 21, 2009. Statutes of 2009, ch. 10. *For more information, contact Curtis Child at curtis.child@jud.ca.gov or 916-323-3121.*

COURT OPERATIONS

AB 663 (Jones), as amended June 15, 2009. Legal aid: court interpreters: appearances by telephone.

Creates a working group to identify and develop best practices to maximize existing resources to increase the number of court interpreters participating in civil actions and proceedings. Creates a pilot project to implement the recommendations of the working group in a small number of courts. Requires the Judicial Council to enter into one or more master agreements with providers of telephonic appearance services.

Requires a telephonic appearance vendor to pay the state \$15 per appearance to support the civil interpreter pilot program. Revises and standardizes the court data collection and reporting requirements. **Status:** Senate Appropriations Committee. *For more information contact Janus Norman at janus.norman@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.*

SB 556 (Committee on Judiciary), as amended July 7, 2009. Courts.

Senate Bill 556 makes several non-controversial changes to improve court operations. The bill clarifies the law governing post-judgment fees in small claims court. SB 556 also clarifies that a court is authorized to submit unpaid bail amounts to the Franchise Tax Board’s Court-Ordered Debt program. Finally, SB 556 makes a conforming change regarding the ability of courts to recover costs for court-ordered probate investigations. **Status:** Assembly Floor. *For more information contact Daniel Pone at daniel.pone@jud.ca.gov or Janus Norman at janus.norman@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.*

JUDGESHIPS

SB 377 (Corbett), as introduced. New judgeships.

Adds the third set of 50 new trial court judgeships to the superior courts, pursuant to the allocation previously approved by the Judicial Council. **Status:** Two-year

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

The following is an update of the first year of the 2009 - 2010 legislative session on selected bills of interest to the courts as of August 4, 2009.

CIVIL & SMALL CLAIMS

SB 209 (Corbett and Harman), as amended July 2, 2009. Civil actions: disabled access.

Provides necessary cleanup to the provisions in Senate Bill 1608 of 2008 ([Corbett et al.] Stats. 2008, ch. 549) regarding sealing of records and protective orders. SB 1608 provided that a Certified Access Specialist program (CASp) report shall be subject to a protective court order if the defendant has satisfied certain requirements relating to inspection of the site at issue. SB 209 would instead require the CASp inspection report to remain confidential and would allow disclosure only to the parties to the action, the parties' attorneys, and others necessary to the settlement of the case. SB 209 would also require the report to remain confidential throughout the stay and until the conclusion of the claim, unless there is a showing of good cause by any party.

Status: In Senate. To Special Consent Calendar

JC position: Support.

CRIMINAL

AB 250 (Miller), as amended May 7, 2009. Criminal procedure: trials: timing.

Requires the defendant's with-

drawal of the waiver of his or her speedy trial time limits to be done in open court. Provides that, in the absence of a general time waiver or upon the withdrawal of a general time waiver, the court shall set a trial date and notify the parties.

Status: Senate Floor

JC Position: Support.

AB 447 (Nestande), as introduced. Criminal procedure: trial counsel: defendant: inability to pay.

Makes mandatory on the court and defendant several provisions relating to the court's determination of a defendant's ability to pay for counsel: in every case in which a defendant appears at arraignment without counsel; in every case in which a court determines that a defendant cannot employ his or her own counsel; in every case in which public counsel is appointed; and in every case in which a juvenile is represented by public counsel.

Status: Assembly Public Safety Committee; Two-year bill

JC Position: Oppose.

AB 458 (Cook), as amended April 29, 2009. Criminal procedure: witness testimony.

Allows a court to compel the testimony of a witness claiming a privilege in a misdemeanor case. Retains provisions requiring that only transactional immunity may be granted in misdemeanor cases.

Status: Failed passage

JC Position: No position.

AB 674 (Salas), as introduced.

Criminal procedure: veterans.

Establishes a deferred entry of judgment program and a preconviction drug diversion program for veterans who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury and who commit specified offenses.

Status: Assembly Public Safety Committee; Two-year bill

JC Position: No position.

AB 742 (Saldaña), as amended May 12, 2009. Elections: felony conviction statements.

Requires the clerk of the superior court in each county to furnish the county elections official with a list of persons who have been convicted of felonies and were sentenced to state prison. Conforms statute with the holding of *League of Women Voters of California v. Bruce McPherson*, 145 Cal.App.4th 1469.

Status: Senate Floor

JC Position: No position.

AB 806 (Fuentes), as amended May 20, 2009. Criminal procedure: pleas.

Requires the court, when accepting a plea from a person who is not a citizen, to advise the person that if he or she is deported and returns to the United States, he or she could be charged with a

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BENCH-BAR COALITION MEMBERS TAKE BUDGET MESSAGES TO LEGISLATORS

While legislators were gearing up for their first open-to-the-public budget conference committee hearings, Bench-Bar Coalition (BBC) members were also making preparations - to take important messages about judicial branch budget cuts directly to legislators in their State Capitol and district offices. Fifty BBC Day in Sacramento legislative visits - the second round this year - were conducted on Wednesday, June 9, 2009, at the Capitol, followed by another 20 visits with legislators and key staff in district offices on June 12 and June 19.

In all, 33 BBC leaders shared their perspectives on key judicial branch budget issues that were being considered by the budget conference committee: the proposed judicial branch budget reductions, the possibility of statewide court closures, and the importance of key judicial branch infrastructure projects, including courthouse construction and technology.

Six teams of BBC members met at the State Capitol for a round of legislative visits that was intended to serve a more focused purpose than the March 2009 visits conducted in conjunction with the State of the Judiciary address. It provided an opportunity for more detailed follow-up meetings with a core group of legislators and legislative staff, including legislators who: (1) serve in a legislative leadership capacity, (2) were members of the budget conference committee, (3) are members of the judiciary and public safety committees, or (4) have a courthouse construction project funded by SB 1407 in the county or counties they represent.

For the district visits, BBC members coupled their budget-related messages with specific examples of local impacts that legislators could readily appreciate - impacts that would be directly felt by constituents and practitioners who use and work in the local courts on a daily basis. The meetings also provided an opportunity for BBC members to strengthen ties with legislative offices as well as to offer to serve as a

resource on local court issues for legislators and staff.

According to "Day in the District" participants, they were well received in the offices they visited and felt that the district meetings were very productive. "It was good to talk with the legislators in their district offices," said

Tamila Jensen, president of the San Fernando Valley Bar Association. "It seemed more focused, less hectic, fewer interruptions, and we could speak more openly and to the point."



BBC Member Tamila Jensen spoke about her Day in the District legislative visits. (Photo courtesy of Ms. Jensen.)

BBC members also encouraged legislators and staff to participate in the "Day on the Bench" program at a court in the legislator's district, where he or she can observe firsthand the challenges facing court leaders and court users. Day on the Bench visits can be held anytime during the year and typically include a tour of the court facility and a roundtable with local judges. The program is a collaborative effort between the Judicial Council of California and the California Judges Association.

The BBC will next meet in the fall to recap their 2009 outreach activities and develop strategies for the second year of the 2009-10 legislative session. For more information about the BBC or the Day on the Bench program, contact Dia Poole dia.poole@jud.ca.gov in the Office of Governmental Affairs or call (916) 323-3121. ■

JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

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million in unallocated reductions.

The Judicial Council, in collaboration with the Governor and the Legislature, worked to mitigate the impact of the reductions through increased court user fees and fund shifts to offset the loss of General Fund support to the Trial Court Trust Fund. As a result, the reductions were offset by \$7 million due to a \$5 increase in the first-paper filing fee, \$11 million due to a \$10 increase in miscellaneous post-judgment fees, \$40 million due to a \$10 increase in the court security fee on criminal convictions, and \$201 million in funds shifts – including \$71 million from local trial court reserves.

The Legislature also adopted two budget trailer bills impacting the judicial branch, SB X4 14 and AB X4 12. AB X4 12 includes a provision that eliminates statutory growth factors and cost-of-living adjustments for all entities, including the judiciary. A number of implementation concerns have been raised by various stakeholders and some are questioning whether the adopted provision is constitutional. Regardless, the Department of Finance has indicated that the Governor's Budget for fiscal year 2010-2011 will not include a SAL adjustment for the trial courts.

SB X4 13 is the main trailer bill for the judicial branch. Specifically, the bill:

- 1) Authorizes the Judicial Council to close the superior courts, Courts of Appeal, and Supreme Court one day per month. These provisions declare the closure day to be a holiday for the transaction of judicial business – including extending filing deadlines and time for holding hearings – to the same extent as any Saturday, Sunday, or other holiday. These provisions also authorize judges and justices to waive a portion of their salary to contribute to the savings created by the closure, and provide that any reduction in
- earnings resulting from the closure shall not affect court employees' or judges' retirement or other benefits. The measure also provides that the closure of the court reduces the need for court security, and requires the court and sheriff to negotiate a reduction in the cost of services provided accordingly.
- 2) Increases by \$10 miscellaneous post-judgment fees for items such as issuing a writ of attachment, mandate, execution, or other writ for the enforcement of any order or judgment, certifying a copy of a paper or record, acknowledging a deed, recording or registering any license, and filing an abstract of judgment or an application for renewal of a judgment.
- 3) Adds reporting requirements previously contained in uncodified supplemental report language requiring the Judicial Council to report to the Legislature on allocations to superior courts, as well as expenditures, revenues, and fund balances.
- 4) Raises from \$20 to \$30 the court security fee imposed upon conviction of any criminal offense. This fee increase will sunset July 1, 2011, unless a later enacted statute extends that date.
- 5) Provides a \$5 civil first-paper filing fee increase, and increases the distribution under Government Code section 68086.1 related to court reporters in civil matters.
- 6) Requires that the cost of services negotiated by the courts with the sheriffs be based not on actual costs, but on average costs of salary and benefits for equivalent personnel classifications in the county, and specifies that benefits shall not include retiree health benefits for sheriff personnel.
- 7) Revises the statute limiting the expenditure of funds on electronic recording equipment to instead clarify that judicial note taking qualifies as an "unofficial record" for which electronic recording may not be used, and that use for

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JUDICIAL COUNCIL-SPONSORED LEGISLATION

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bill. For more information contact Donna Hershkowitz at donna.hershkowitz@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.

JUDICIAL BENEFITS

SB 11 (Second Extraordinary Session, Steinberg). Judicial benefits.

A 2008 Court of Appeal decision (*Sturgeon v. Los Angeles*) held that 1997 trial court funding legislation authorizing county-paid supplemental judicial benefits was inconsistent with state constitutional requirements and invalidated the judicial benefits being paid by Los Angeles County to superior court judges in that county. SB X2 11 authorizes counties and courts that have been providing local judicial benefits to continue to provide those benefits on the same terms and conditions as provided on July 1, 2008. The AOC is also required to provide to the Legislature on or before December 31, 2009, a report analyzing the statewide benefits inconsistencies. **Status:** Signed into law. The legislation became effective May 21, 2009. Statutes 2009, ch.9. For more information, contact Curtis Child at curtis.child@jud.ca.gov or 916-323-3121.

JURIES

SB 319 (Harman), as amended April 22, 2009. Jury service.

Eliminates the sunset and reporting requirement on provisions allowing courts to impose monetary sanctions for failure to appear in response to a jury summons. Decreases the amount of time that must elapse before a compliance action may be initiated. **Status:** Enrolled. For more information contact June Clark at june.clark@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.

JUVENILE DEPENDENCY

Blue Ribbon Commission Foster Care Reform.

The California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care (BRC), chaired by Justice Carlos Moreno, issued its final recommendations to the Judicial Council in August 2008. Three bills are sponsored or co-sponsored by the council this year to implement those recommendations:

AB 12 (Beall and Bass), as amended April 29, 2009. Juvenile dependency.

Extends foster care support for youth who are pursuing educational or vocational goals to the age of 21 to ensure that they can make a transition to adulthood. It would also revise California's existing kinship guardianship program (Kin-GAP) to allow the state to obtain federal funding to support this successful program. **Status:** Two-year bill. For more information contact Tracy Kenny at tracy.kenny@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.

AB 131 (Evans), as amended July 15, 2009. Juvenile dependency: juvenile proceedings: costs.

Authorizes the Judicial Council to implement a cost recovery program to collect reimbursements from parents for the cost of dependency counsel, and directs that the recovered funds be used to reduce caseloads for attorneys. **Status:** Senate Floor. For more information contact Tracy Kenny at tracy.kenny@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121.

AB 938 (Committee on Judiciary), as amended June 18, 2009. Dependent children: relative caregivers and foster parents.

Requires that social workers investigate the identity and location of all adult grandparents and other relatives of a child after the child is detained, and notify the relatives that the child has been removed from his or her parents, and the means by which the relative might participate in the care of the child. **Status:** Senate Appropriations Committee. For more information, contact Tracy Kenny at tracy.kenny@jud.ca.gov or 916-323-3121. ■

JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

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monitoring performance by a court remains an acceptable use of electronic recording equipment. This provision also requires superior courts to obtain approval from the Judicial Council prior to purchasing any electronic recording equipment to ensure the anticipated use is authorized by statute.

- 8) Requires the Administrative Office of the Courts and the superior courts of California to submit information technology projects over \$5 million to the state Chief Information Officer for administrative review.
- 9) Increases access to judicial branch budget and financial information and requires the Judicial Council to adopt rules of court, by January 1, 2010, regarding public access to information.

The Governor signed the budget revision on July 28, 2009. The Governor did not line-item veto any additional funding for judicial branch operations. Over the fall, the Judicial Council will continue to work with the Governor and legislative leadership to seek adequate funding to resume full operation of the courts and improve access to justice. As it currently stands, the impact of the July 2009 budget revision on future fiscal years is dramatic. While \$314.6 million of the unallocated reduction is ongoing, only \$58 million of the above-mentioned revenue solutions (specifically, the fee increases) have a multi-year

impact.



Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signs the state budget on July 28, 2009. (Photo by Peter Grigsby, Office of the Governor.)

For more information about the judicial branch budget, contact Janus Norman in the Office of Governmental Affairs at (916) 323-3121. ■

AMMIANO CHAIRS BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

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As a strong advocate for schools, health care and civil rights, Assembly Member Ammiano has been at the forefront of reform in California. He came to Sacramento with a desire to unite the state behind his strong leadership for change in California. As the budget subcommittee chair, he hopes to carry his mantra for change into the inner workings of state government.

“During this challenging time for the state, it is clear that we need to reform how state government works,” Ammiano told *The Capitol Connection*. “The respite we have after closing this budget shortfall is short-lived and the call for budget reform is now louder than ever. To restore California’s economic health, we must begin to solve the structural problems that have led us to this place and pass responsible revenue

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

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separate federal offense and subjected to harsh penalties for illegal reentry into the United States.

Status: Senate Floor

JC Position: No position.

AB 1123 (Davis), as amended April 20, 2009. Professions and vocations: process servers: registration.

Eliminates the court's role in suspending or revoking process server registrations.

Status: Enrolled

JC Position: No position.

AB 1516 (Lieu), as amended July 16, 2009. Criminal procedure: discovery.

Allows the court to order a defendant or juvenile, upon timely request of the prosecution, to submit to an examination by a prosecution-retained mental health expert whenever the defendant or respondent places his or her mental state in issue at any phase of the criminal action or juvenile proceeding through proposed testimony of any mental health expert.

Status: Senate Floor

JC Position: No position.

SB 431 (Benoit), as amended June 4, 2009. Probation: transfers.

Requires a court, when granting probation to an individual who permanently resides in a county other than the county of conviction, to transfer legal jurisdiction of the case to the county in which that person permanently resides, unless the court determines on the record that the transfer would be inappropriate. Requires the court in the county of the probationer's residence to accept legal jurisdiction over the case. Requires the Judicial Council to adopt rules of court providing factors for the court's consideration when determining the appropriateness of a transfer and procedures for the transfers.

Status: In Senate. To Special Consent Calendar

JC Position: Support.

SB 432 (Runner), as amended May 21, 2009. Crime victims: restitution.

Requires the probation officer of the county from which a person is committed to an institution under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to send to the department a victim's contact information, if the victim consents, when the court has ordered the defendant to pay restitution to the victim. States that the victim's contact information would remain confidential.

Status: Enrolled

JC Position: Neutral, as amended May 5, 2009.

SB 678 (Leno), as amended June 25, 2009. Criminal recidivism.

Creates the California Community Corrections Performance Incentive Act to provide sustainable funding for improved, evidence-based probation supervision practices and capacities to improve public safety outcomes among adult felons who are on probation. Provides a formula-based system for sharing state savings with probation for purposes of improved supervision of felony probationers when those savings are achieved as a result of reduced prison admissions attributable to improved felony probation outcomes.

Status: Assembly Appropriations Committee

JC Position: Support.

FAMILY LAW

AB 375 (Nielsen), as amended June 1, 2009. Child custody: child sexual abuse.

Limits the use of ex parte proceedings to modify child custody orders when there is evidence that the person seeking custody has committed recent acts of child sexual abuse.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

JC Position: No position.

AB 612 (Beall), as amended June 28, 2009. Custody and visitation: nonscientific theories.

Provides that courts may consider the significant hostility of a child to a parent as evidence corroborating allegations of abuse by that parent in a child custody dispute, and shall not make a determination that allegations of physical or sexual abuse are false based

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

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solely on the expression of significant hostility by the child to the allegedly abusive parent. Requires that training for child custody evaluators include this provision.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

JC Position: Neutral, as amended May 5, 2009.

MISCELLANEOUS

AB 32 (Lieu), as amended June 17, 2009. Public Officials: personal information.

Requires a person, business, or association, upon receiving the written demand of an elected or appointed official, including judicial officers, to immediately remove the official's home address or telephone number from public display on the Internet and to continue to ensure that information is not reposted on the Internet or any subsidiary Web site. Allows an elected or appointed official to designate the official's employer or any voluntary professional association of similar officials to act as that official's agent with regard to making a written demand or seeking enforcement of these posting requirements.

Status: Assembly Floor for Concurrence in Senate Amendments

JC Position: Support.

AB 942 (Committee on Judiciary), as amended July 14, 2009. Judgeships.

Provides the Judicial Council with the opportunity to expedite the conversion of subordinate judicial officers to judgeships by increasing the number of conversions that may occur in each year from 16 to 26. Allows the additional positions to be converted (up to 10) if the conversion would result in a judge being assigned to a family or juvenile law calendar previously assigned to a subordinate judicial officer.

Status: Senate Appropriations Committee

JC Position: Support. ■

AMMIANO CHAIRS BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE

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solutions. As chair, I am committed to the ideas that will move the state towards economic recovery and hope to work collaboratively with my colleagues on the subcommittee to develop the necessary solutions towards that goal."

When asked for his thoughts on the outcome of the recent budget negotiations and impact of budget reductions on the judicial branch, Ammiano was realistic about the challenges facing the court system.

"There is nothing to be happy about in this year's budget and I fully understand that the monthly court closure day will reduce the public's access to justice,"

Ammiano said. "However, I believe that the Administrative Office of the Courts' plan to absorb this reduction in service will minimize the impact as much as possible until we are able to restore the state's economic health."

Ammiano formally assumed his new duties on June 9, 2009. Other subcommittee members include Assembly Members Wesley Chesbro (D-Eureka), Paul Cook (R-Yucaipa), Hector De La Torre (D-South Gate), and Kevin Jeffries (R-Riverside).

Assembly Member Ammiano can be reached in the State Capitol at (916) 319-2013. ■



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NEW LAWS WORKSHOP TAKES ON NEW FORMAT, USES TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION

The Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is once again co-sponsoring New Laws Workshops with the California Court Association (CCA), and the Coalition of Trial Court Clerk Associations (CTCCA) Legislation Committee.

The workshops are designed to facilitate discussion and development of court procedures necessary to implement new laws enacted in 2009 that affect the trial courts.

In recognition of the cost pressures on the entire branch, and the impact a full day away from the court for training may have in 2009, the 2009 workshops will have a new format. Using Web-Ex technology, online videos, and teleconferencing, California courts will have an opportunity to attend multiple workshop sessions from the convenience of their own courthouses. The sessions are open to all trial court managers, supervisors, and court staff responsible for developing and implementing new procedures. This format will have the benefit of allowing increased participation from courts around the state.

Whereas in past years, workshop participants received course materials onsite, court staff will have online access to course “binders” weeks before the workshop sessions. An orientation video, also available online in early November, will instruct participants on how to use the materials to prepare for a series of workshop sessions, called “Webinars,” using Web-Ex technology that combines real-time, Internet-based document presentations with teleconferencing.

Previously, courts could register only a limited number of participants to attend one of three workshops in Sacramento, San Francisco, or the Los Angeles area due to space limitations. Each of the new 90-minute Webinar sessions, tentatively scheduled for mid-November and repeated so that every court has an opportunity to participate, can accommodate multiple court staff at multiple court locations throughout the state, increasing access and eliminating costly travel. Participants will now have an opportunity to submit questions on the materials in advance and have those questions answered during the Webinar while simultaneously viewing the course materials online and teleconferencing with a panel of subject matter experts.

Watch for additional information about workshop course materials and the registration process in September and October in announcements to court leadership, *Court News Update*, and on the Serranus Website.

For questions regarding the New Laws Workshops, please contact Henry Sepulveda at 916-323-3121 or henry.sepulveda@jud.ca.gov. ■

News from the AOC

In addition to *The Capitol Connection*, the Administrative Office of the Courts publishes several publications reporting on various aspects of court business. Visit these online on the California Courts Web site at www.courtinfo.ca.gov

California Courts Review is a quarterly magazine by, for, and about the state judicial branch. See the current edition at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/reference/ccr.htm>.

