



The Capitol Connection

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS • OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Legislative Calendar

June 15
Budget Bill must be passed by midnight

BBC MEMBERS RETURN TO STATE CAPITOL

As a result of a very successful day of meetings with legislators, members of the Bench-Bar Coalition (BBC) were instrumental in gaining the necessary support to have two very critical bills for the judicial branch approved by members of the Senate.

During the BBC's "Day in Sacramento" event at the State Capitol held on May 25, 2005, BBC members visited the offices of key senators and assembly members. The BBC's efforts were both timely and effective given the critical nature of the proposals before the Legislature. In all, BBC members met with 65 legislators and staff who hold leadership

positions or who are members of fiscal and policy committees that hear court-related issues.

Supporting the call for new judgeships, court facility improvements, and stable funding for the trial courts has been a central focus for the BBC, whose members include judges and state, local, minority and specialty bar leaders. During this year's second Day in Sacramento, 42 BBC members met with legislators to discuss Judicial Council-sponsored legislation and the judicial branch budget. Judicial Council members and leaders of special commissions and task forces also participated in the program.



Attorney W. Patrick O'Keefe, representing the Orange County Bar Association, discusses Judicial Council-sponsored legislation with Assembly Member Lynn Daucher (D-Brea).

Following a continental breakfast, BBC Co-Chair Anthony Capozzi welcomed the Day in

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LEGISLATOR PROFILE: ASSEMBLY MEMBER JUAN ARAMBULA



Assembly Member Juan Arambula was elected in 2004 to represent the 31st Assembly District, which includes part of the City of Fresno, rural Fresno County, and northwestern Tulare County. The district also includes the cities of Dinuba, Firebaugh, Fowler, Kerman, Sanger, and Selma.

Assembly Member Arambula is chair of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development & the Economy. He is also a member of the Assembly Education, Human Services, and Budget committees, including Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4, which has jurisdiction over the judicial branch budget.

"My goal while serving in the Legislature is to develop sound

policy for the state's long term future, especially in the areas of education and economic development," Assembly Member Arambula said.

Assembly Member Juan Arambula is the son of immigrant farm workers, the fifth of seven children. In his youth, Mr. Arambula worked alongside his family, harvesting crops throughout California. From this background arose Mr. Arambula's commitment to improve the living conditions of those around him.

Early in his career Assembly Member Arambula served as an attorney for the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. He also performed legal services for California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) in its Delano office and headed up

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UPDATE ON JUDICIAL COUNCIL-SPONSORED LEGISLATION

New Judgeships/SJO Conversions

Senate Bill 56 (Dunn), the Judicial Council-sponsored bill that proposes the creation of new judgeships and the conversion of certain eligible subordinate judicial officers, passed the Senate floor on June 1 by a 36-2 vote. The bill was amended to omit the number of new judgeships and conversions. Prior to the vote, legislators received more than 30 letters of support from presiding judges and executive officers of trial courts, bar association leadership, and Bench-Bar Coalition member organizations. The bill now moves to the Assembly. The bill is likely to be amended in the Assembly to specify by court the new judgeships and eligible SJO conversions.

For more information about SB 56 contact Eraina Ortega at eraina.ortega@jud.ca.gov.

Court Facilities Bond

Senate Bill 395 (Escutia), which states the intent of the Legislature to enact the California Court Facilities Bond Act of 2006 to acquire, rehabilitate, construct, and finance court facilities, passed the Senate floor on June 1 by a 24-12 vote. The bill was amended to omit the amount of the proposed bond. The bill now moves to the Assembly. If approved by the Legislature and the Governor, the bond would be placed on the ballot in an upcoming statewide election.

For more information on SB 395, contact Eraina Ortega at eraina.ortega@jud.ca.gov.

Uniform Civil Fee Proposal

In April 2004, the Court Fees Working Group (CFWG) made unanimous recommendations for a statewide uniform civil fee structure. The Uniform Civil Fee (UCF) proposal will streamline and vastly simplify the civil fee structure, provide for uniformity across the state, and address the funding shortfall under the current fee structure.

The UCF proposal was approved by the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 4 on May 18. Because it was not approved in the Assembly, the proposal will now go to the Budget Conference Committee for review. The new fee structure will be approved upon passage of the state budget, but will likely take effect at a later date specified in the budget trailer bill. The delayed effective date will allow courts sufficient time to implement the new structure. A full draft of the UCF can be found at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/courtadmin/civilfees.htm.

For more information on the UCF, contact Eraina Ortega at eraina.ortega@jud.ca.gov.

Judges' Retirement

Senate Bill 528 (Ackerman and Dunn), as introduced on February 18, 2005, declares the Legislature's intent to evaluate the impact of trial court unification on the judges' retirement systems and the resulting increase in judges' ages at the start of their judicial service. This bill is a two-year bill, allowing the council to report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of

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MAY REVISE CONTAINS SAL INCREASE FOR JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

The Governor's May revision to the budget was proposed on May 13 and as expected the "May Revise" included an increase to the State Appropriation Limit (SAL) from the 4.8 percent proposed in January to 6 percent. On May 16, the Department of Finance advised that the SAL would again be revised to 6.65 percent, bringing the total SAL allocation to the trial courts to \$134.8 million.

The May Revise also included several technical adjustments, provisional language to allow lease revenue payments for a juvenile court facility in Fresno, and funding to cover the increased costs of a new court facility in Merced (\$3.04 million). Just prior to the May Revise, a request was also submitted to the Legislature to fund acquisition and preliminary plans for a new four-

courtroom, 40,000 square foot courthouse in the Antioch-Brentwood-Oakley area of Contra Costa County (\$7.23 million).

What Happens Now?

Both the Assembly and Senate budget subcommittees have completed their review of the judicial branch budget; however, a number of significant issues remain open and must be negotiated through the budget conference committee process. Conference committee meetings will begin the first week of June. Issues to be resolved include:

- SAL allocation: \$134.8 million.
- Adjustment to trial court base budgets: \$92.6 million.

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

The following is an update of the first year of the 2005-2006 legislative session on selected bills of interest to the courts.

COURT OPERATIONS

AB 176 (Bermúdez), as amended April 21, 2005.

Trial courts: limited-term employees.

Existing law prohibits the employment of any temporary employee in the trial court for a period exceeding 180 calendar days, except for court reporters under certain conditions. This bill would prohibit the employment of any limited-term law clerk employed in the Los Angeles trial court for a period exceeding 180 calendar days. The bill would further provide that any limited-term law clerk employed by Los Angeles court for more than 180 calendar days is a regular employee.

Sponsor: Association of Federal, State, County, and Municipal Employees

Status: Passed Assembly

JC Position: Oppose.

AB 759 (Lieber), as amended April 4, 2005. Misdemeanors: penalty assessments.

Authorizes a county board of supervisors in a county that has established a local Crime Stoppers Program to levy a new penalty assessment of up to \$2, upon every fine, penalty, or forfeiture imposed and collected by the courts for misdemeanor criminal offenses.

Notes: The penalty assessment authorized by the bill presents problems for court case management systems since it only applies to misdemeanor offenses.

Status: Assembly Public Safety Committee. 2-year bill.

JC Position: Oppose unless amended or funded.

SB 56 (Dunn), as amended May 26, 2005. New judgeships.

Authorizes an undetermined number of additional judges for appointment to the various counties, as determined by the Judicial Council. Additionally, authorizes conversion of an undetermined number of subordinate judicial officers.

Status: Passed Senate

JC Position: Sponsor

SB 57 (Alarcón), as amended May 26, 2005. Fines and forfeitures.

Authorizes a county board of supervisors to levy a new \$2 penalty assessment for every \$10, upon every fine, penalty, or forfeiture imposed and collected by the courts for specified criminal offenses. Revenue generated would be deposited into the county's Maddy Emergency Medical Fund.

Notes: The bill was amended to remove authorization for a second \$2 assessment that would have applied to specific categories of offenses.

Status: Passed Senate

JC Position: Oppose

SB 395 (Escutia), as amended May 26, 2005. Court facilities bond.

Enacts the California Court Facilities Bond Act of 2006 to acquire, rehabilitate, construct, and finance court facilities.

Status: Passed Senate

JC Position: Sponsor

CRIMINAL

AB 106 (Cohn), as amended March 8, 2005. Spousal battery: fines: amnesty.

Requires the courts of each county to establish a one-time amnesty program, based upon Judicial Council guidelines, for fines, bail, and other monetary obligations that are imposed for certain domestic violence offenses that have been delinquent for not less than six months as of January 1, 2006. Provides that the amount scheduled by the court shall be 70 percent of the total fines, fees, penalties, or assessments imposed. The Judicial Council is opposed to this bill because it is inconsistent with the recommendations of the SB 940 Court County Working Group on Enhanced Collections.

Status: Assembly Appropriations; held in committee.

JC Position: Oppose

AB 1542 (Parra), as amended May 4, 2005. Crimes by veterans: sentencing.

Expands existing law governing the court's sentencing authority applicable to combat veterans of Vietnam who have substance abuse or psychological problems related to that service and are convicted of a felony to apply to a combat veteran of any war who has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor, and suffers from post traumatic stress disorder, substance abuse, or psychological or emotional problems as a result of that service.

Status: Passed Assembly

JC Position: No position.

AB 1551 (Runner), as amended May 18, 2005. Sexual predators.

Strengthens the sentencing scheme for sexual assault on children.

Notes: The Judicial Council opposed AB 1551 unless amended to strike the provision eliminating the court's authority under Penal Code section 1385 to dismiss an action in the furtherance of justice. The council has long advo-

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LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

(Continued from page 3)

cated that, while the discretion is not absolute, dismissal of an action in the furtherance of justice is within the court's "exclusive discretion." The May 18 version of the bill deleted this provision, and the council has withdrawn its opposition and is now neutral on the bill.

Sponsor: California District Attorneys Association

Status: Passed Assembly

JC position: Neutral

SB 330 (Cedillo), as amended March 29, 2005. Criminal proceedings: mental competency.

Requires a criminal action to be dismissed if a defendant in a misdemeanor or infraction case is not brought to trial within 30 days after the date of the reinstatement of criminal proceedings pursuant to the provisions of law governing the mental competency of defendants.

Sponsor: Los Angeles City Attorney

Status: Assembly Public Safety Committee

JC position: Support

SB 864 (Poochigian), as amended May 25, 2005. Sexually violent predators: term of commitment

Authorizes commitment as a sexually violent predator to the state Department of Mental Health for a four-year term rather than for a two-year term for treatment of the person's diagnosed mental disorder if the person is adjudicated to be likely to engage in sexually violent criminal behavior if discharged. Requires that courts give a preference in scheduling commitment trials over all other civil matters.

Sponsor: California District Attorneys Association. To comment, contact June Clark at june.clark@jud.ca.gov or (916) 323-3121

Status: Passed Senate

JC position: No position

CIVIL PROCEDURE

AB 496 (Aghazarian), as amended April 26, 2005. Service of process: retention of original summons in court file.

Existing law provides that a plaintiff may have the clerk issue one or more summons for any defendant. Among other things, this bill would require the clerk to maintain the original summons in the court file.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

AB 1459 (Canciamilla), as amended May 18, 2005. Small claims court jurisdiction

Among other things, increases the small claims court jurisdiction over actions brought by a natural person from \$5,000 to \$7,500. Provides that the filing fee for cases in which the jurisdictional limit is greater than \$5,000 is \$50 with \$5 of the fee to be used for enhancement of advisory services and the balance to be deposited into the Trial Court Trust Fund. Requires temporary judges, prior to serving in small claims court, to take a specified course of study offered by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Status: Passed Assembly

JC position: Support if amended.

SB 312 (Ackerman), as introduced. Summary judgment.

Existing law requires that notice of a motion for summary judgment and supporting papers shall be served on all other parties to the action at least 75 days before the time appointed for hearing. This bill would make an exception to that requirement if the court for good cause orders otherwise or the parties stipulate otherwise. The bill would additionally authorize a party to move for summary adjudication of a legal issue or claim for damages, other than punitive damages, that does not completely dispose of a cause of action, an affirmative defense, or an issue of duty according to specified procedures.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee. 2-year bill.

SB 422 (Simitian), as amended May 26, 2005. Small claims court jurisdiction

Among other things, increases the small claims court jurisdiction over actions brought by a natural person from \$5,000 to \$7,500. Increases the filing fee for cases in which the jurisdictional limit exceeds \$5,000 from \$20 to \$100, \$5 of which is to be used for enhancement of advisory services. Requires temporary judges, prior to serving in small claims court, to take a specified course of study offered by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Status: Passed Senate

JC position: Support if amended.

FAMILY

AB 104 (Cohn), as amended May 25, 2005. Protective orders: dismissal.

Provides that a domestic violence protective order may be dismissed by the issuing judge, to the extent feasible, upon a substantial change of circumstances, and written stipulation filed with the court or on the motion of a party to terminate the order prior to its expiration date. Authorizes a protective order to be dismissed by the issuing judge if the protected person appears before the court and the court makes a find-

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AB 1742, CIVIL OMNIBUS AND COURT OPERATIONS: CHANGES AFFECTING THE CALIFORNIA COURTS

Assembly Bill 1742, sponsored by the Judicial Council, proposes a variety of non-controversial changes to civil law and procedure, as well as several technical statutory changes that will improve court operations. Among other things, the bill would remove the sunset of Code of Civil Procedure (CCP) section 128.7, the sole remaining statute authorizing sanctions for the filing of frivolous lawsuits, which is due to expire on January 1, 2006. The removal of the sunset provision of section 128.7 will help deter the filing of frivolous lawsuits by continuing the courts' sanctioning authority in this area.

The bill also extends until June 30, 2006, the court security fee that will expire on June 30, 2005, or until the Uniform Civil Fee (UCF) proposal is implemented, whichever happens first. The Judicial Council expects that the soonest the UCF will be implemented is November 1, 2005. Without this bridge legislation, court funding would be reduced each month until the UCF is in place. The loss in revenue is approximately \$15 million over the course of a fiscal year.

In addition, the bill would require that an acceptance of an offer to compromise a claim under CCP section 998 must be in writing, which should help avoid the confusion that can arise with oral acceptances.

AB 1742 also clarifies and streamlines small claims procedures and simplifies the handling of such cases. The bill provides that when a claim is filed in small claims court, the case must be scheduled for hearing no earlier than 20 days nor later than 70 days from the date of the order. This change will eliminate the various time periods that exist under current law, give the plaintiff a wider choice of hearing dates and more time to serve on the defendant an order to appear, reduce requests for continuances, and

save the courts both processing time and costs. The bill further requires that proof of service of the claim and order be filed at least five days before the hearing. A uniform statewide procedure requiring small claims plaintiffs to file proof of service of the claim several days before the hearing will help courts manage their small claims trial calendars and avoid confusion for parties who file small claims actions in multiple courts around the state.

In addition, the bill authorizes a party to make only one motion to correct a clerical error or to set aside and vacate a small claims judgment, and provides that a party has 30 days to make that motion after the clerk mails to the parties notice of entry of judgment. This change provides reasonable time for the parties to inspect the notice for clerical or other errors and, if necessary, to seek to correct or vacate the judgment, while at the same time conserving judicial resources by preventing a party from filing multiple, nonmeritorious motions to correct or vacate a judgment.

Finally, the bill contains some cleanup of the judicial provisions in the Tort Claims Act. These changes place the judicial branch process on a consistent footing with the state process by (1) clarifying the kinds of claims that need to be presented to the Judicial Council before a lawsuit can be filed to make the section identical to the provisions governing claims against the state, (2) clarifying that the judicial branch, like the state and other local governments, is not required to present claims against local governments before commencing a lawsuit, and (3) allowing the courts, like the state, to require claimants to present their claims on a mandated claim form.

For more information on AB 1742, contact Dan Pone at daniel.pone@jud.ca.gov.

MAY REVISE CONTAINS SAL INCREASE FOR JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

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- Restoration of a \$60.5 million one-time reduction approved in fiscal year 2004-05.
- Undesignated Fees: proposal to extend the existing \$31 million transfer from counties to the Trial Court Trust Fund.
- Forensic Evaluations: proposal to increase county Maintenance of Effort payments to fund \$5.5 million in increased costs to the trial courts.
- Uniform Civil Fee proposal: inclusion in budget trailer bill language.

- Expansion of SAL to apply to Supreme Court, Courts of Appeal, and the Administrative Office of the Courts' budgets.
- Judicial Council report on the effectiveness of Judges' Retirement System II.
- Reappropriation of \$2.7 million for site acquisition for the Orange County Appellate Courthouse.

The Capitol Connection will bring you further details as these items are addressed through the budget conference process and by judicial, legislative and executive branch leadership. The constitutional deadline for the Legislature to pass the budget bill is June 15 at midnight. ■

BBC MEMBERS RETURN TO STATE CAPITOL

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Sacramento participants and thanked them for their personal commitment of resources and time away from their court responsibilities and practices to make the trip to Sacramento and advocate in support of the branch.

Participants were briefed on the status of the judicial branch budget negotiations. Each coalition member received materials on the selected legislators and background on recent advocacy efforts on behalf of the judicial branch.

Dia Poole, the Office of Governmental Affairs' liaison to the BBC, reviewed suggested talking points for discussions with legislators and key staff. Administrative Chief Deputy Director of the Courts Ronald G. Overholt and Office of Governmental Affairs (OGA) Director Kate Howard presented overviews of the prior weeks' actions by the Assembly and Senate budget subcommittees and shared up-to-the minute developments on the May Revision of the Governor's Budget.



Toby Rothschild (l) with the California Access to Justice Commission, Kenneth Petrulis with the Beverly Hills Bar Association, and Beverly Williams (r) with the John M. Langston Bar Association, prepare for legislative visits.

Just as various Senate and Assembly offices opened and committees began to convene, coalition members fanned out for a full day of appointments. For the scheduled appointments, BBC members were divided into 13 teams based on geographic regions of the state: San Francisco Bay Area, Northern/Central California, San Diego/Inland Empire, and two teams covering Los Ange-

les/Orange County. This format enabled them to meet with the legislators as both constituents and as advocates for the judicial branch.

At the conclusion of each meeting, the Coalition provided each legislator with informational materials on the BBC, priority legislation, and issues of mutual interest.

Later that afternoon, when all of the teams returned from their last appointments, a debriefing was held during which all participants had an opportunity to offer their perspectives on the legislative meetings and the overall event. Comments on the May visits provided OGA staff with valuable insights on where lawmakers stand on the issues. In their program evaluations, attendees also reported that the overall event was well orchestrated and worth the commitment of time and resources to travel to Sacramento.



James Fisher (c) with the Alameda County Bar Association, and Melissa Holmes (r), with the San Mateo County Bar Association, discuss critical judicial branch legislation with Assembly Member John Laird (D-Santa Cruz).

The Office of Governmental Affairs will continue to follow up with legislative offices requesting additional information as a result of the interest and momentum generated from the BBC contacts. For more information about the BBC or the Day in Sacramento, please contact Dia Poole, the AOC's liaison to the BBC, at (916) 323-3121 phone, (916) 323-4347 fax, or email to dia.poole@jud.ca.gov. ■

LEGISLATOR PROFILE: ASSEMBLY MEMBER JUAN ARAMBULA

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CRLA's statewide migrant farm worker project for three years.

As a member of the Fresno County Board of Supervisors from 1997 until his election to the Legislature, Assembly Member Arambula worked to reduce youth violence, increase job development, improve access to quality health care for Fresno families, and promote smart growth. As a supervisor Assembly Member Arambula also led the fight to fund construction of a new Juvenile Hall facility, to open the Caruthers Boot Camp for juvenile offenders, and to expand the county jail's capacity. He was also a strong advo-

cate for prevention programs, helping Fresno County earn the highest grade statewide for the use of its youth violence prevention funds.

A graduate from Harvard University with high honors and a degree in comparative literature, he went on to receive a master's degree in educational administration and policy analysis from Stanford University, and a law degree from Boalt Law School at the University of California at Berkeley in 1981.

Assembly Member Arambula lives in Fresno with his wife of 27 years, Amy. He has four adult children: Joaquin, Carmen, Diego, and Miguel. ■

UPDATE ON JUDICIAL COUNCIL-SPONSORED LEGISLATION

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JRS II based on the ten years of experience under the new system. This assessment of JRS II's effectiveness is required by supplemental reporting language currently pending in the budget.

For more information on SB 528, contact June Clark at june.clark@jud.ca.gov. ■

LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

(Continued from page 4)

ing that the protected person is acting voluntarily without coercion or duress.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

JC Position: Oppose

AB 118 (Cohn), as amended May 25, 2005. Protective orders: minor children.

Requires that child custody orders must reference and acknowledge the precedence of enforcement of a criminal protective order issued in cases where a criminal protective order protects the custodial parent and provides that contact between a restrained parent and a protected parent shall be for safe exchange only.

Status: Senate Judiciary Committee

JUDICIAL OFFICERS

AB 1595 (Evans), as amended May 16, 2005. Public safety officials: confidentiality

Prohibits a person, business, or association from selling or trading for value on the Internet the home address or telephone number of any elected or appointed official if that official has made a written demand of that person, business, or association to not disclose his or her home address or telephone number. Provides for exceptions for health care providers and financial institutions covered under existing privacy laws.

Notes: Product of 2004 Final Report of the Public Safety Officials' Home Protection Act Advisory Task Force. Council to seek amendment allowing public safety official to submit opt-out request to Secretary of State for inclusion in "opt-out registry."

Sponsor: Author

Status: Senate, awaiting committee assignment

JC position: Support

SB 506 (Poochigian), as amended May 31, 2005. Voter records: confidentiality

Allows a county elections official to, upon application of a public safety officer, to make confidential the residence information of the officer contained in the affidavit of registration, subject to certain requirements. Provides

that public safety officer includes judges and court commissioners for the purposes of the bill.

Notes: Product of 2004 Final Report of the Public Safety Officials' Home Protection Act Advisory Task Force.

Sponsor: Author

Status: Passed Senate

JC position: Support

JUVENILE DEPENDENCY

SB 218 (Scott), as amended April 21, 2005. Termination of parental rights: prospective adoptive parents.

Authorizes the court to designate specified caretakers as prospective adoptive parents in cases where a dependent child's parents have had their rights terminated, and the child has resided with the caretaker for at least six months, and the caretaker has expressed an interest in adopting the child. Where the court makes this designation, a child could not be removed from the home of that caretaker until a noticed hearing had been conducted to determine that such removal was in the child's best interests.

Status: Passed Senate

PROBATE

SB 390 (Bowen), as amended June 1, 2005. Probate assignments: cash advances.

Existing law provides for the regulation of the distribution of an estate. This bill would regulate the assignment of a beneficiary's entire or partial interest in an estate in consideration for a cash advance or any other consideration, as specified. Among other things, the bill would require the agreement to be filed with the court, would require specified disclosures with regard to costs and fees, and would prohibit an assignment agreement form containing certain provisions, including, but not limited to, a binding arbitration clause. The bill would further authorize the court to modify or refuse to order that assignment under specified circumstances, and would allow for specified damages upon a willful violation of the above-described provisions.

Status: Assembly Judiciary Committee ■



Judicial Council of California
Administrative Office of the Courts
Office of Governmental Affairs

770 L Street, Suite 700
Sacramento, CA 95814
Telephone 916-323-3121
Fax 916-323-4347

Editor-in-Chief

Dia S. Poole

Contributors

June Clark
Kate Howard
Tracy Kenny
Eraina Ortega
Daniel Pone
Shaun Young

Story Manager

Christina Fonseca

Production Staff

Yvette Trevino
Michele Williamson

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Yvette Trevino at
916-323-3121,
yvette.trevino@jud.ca.gov.

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CAPITOL FOSTER CARE MONTH EVENT FOCUSES ON PERMANENCY

The Judicial Council was one of twenty-one organizations that came together at the State Capitol on May 3 to recognize May as National Foster Care Month, and to bring legislative attention to the needs of children and families in the foster care system. The theme of the event was achieving permanency for youth, and ensuring that no child leaves the foster care system without a lifelong connection with a caring adult. Four teams from different counties were showcased and honored, each representing a different method of achieving permanency for dependent youth: reunification, adoption, kinship guardianship, and lifelong connection. Each member of the team received an award from a local legislator, and a youth member of each team described the ways in which they had benefited from making permanent connections.

Judge Michael Nash, presiding judge of the juvenile court in Los Angeles and a current member of the Judicial Council, participated in the event on behalf of the Judicial Council, and presented an award to former Assembly Member Darrell Steinberg. Judge Nash described Steinberg as “the best friend the foster care system has ever had in the Legislature,” and he praised Steinberg for his many legislative achievements on behalf of children in foster care. The event also honored Pat Reynolds-Harris, the founder and director of the California Permanency for Youth Project, which works to find permanent relationships for foster youth to ease their transition to adulthood and independence.

Secretary of State Bruce McPherson, who authored legislation as a state senator to allow family members who assume legal guardianship of a child to receive financial assistance, also spoke, and noted that California’s efforts to reduce the number of children in foster care have begun to show positive results, with the numbers of children in care declining over the last six years.

After the public event concluded, the four teams met with legislators and their staff to share their experiences and provide an opportunity for further discussion on the ongoing needs of the foster care system. ■



Judge Michael Nash (r) introduced former Assembly Member Darrell Steinberg during National Foster Care month ceremonies on the steps of the State Capitol.

Photo Credit: Lauren Crew

News From the AOC

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

CFCC Update: Reports on developments in juvenile and family law, including innovative programs, case law summaries from the AOC’s Center for Families, Children and the Courts; grants and resources, and updates on legislation and rules and forms. Published three times a year. See www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/resources/publications/newsletter.htm.