

Consent Agenda

(If you wish to request that any item be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Discussion Agenda, please notify Dennis Blanchard at 415-865-7455 at least 48 hours before the meeting.)

Item 1 Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel of Experts on the Fair and Efficient Administration of Civil Cases (For Information Only; No Action Required)

Staff: Mr. Patrick O'Donnell, Office of the General Counsel
 Mr. Daniel Pone, Office of Governmental Affairs
 Staff to the Blue Ribbon Panel

The Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel of Experts on the Fair and Efficient Administration of Civil Cases is a report by a distinguished group of jurists and prominent attorneys appointed by Chief Justice Ronald M. George. The report presents the panel's recommendations addressing problems that have arisen in connection with the implementation of the Trial Delay Reduction Act.

The Civil Delay Reduction Program has been very successful in that it has created firm trial dates, eliminated case backlogs, and significantly reduced the time from filing to disposition of civil cases, all of which were chronic problems in the 1980s. But in implementing trial delay reduction, some courts are apparently being inflexible or arbitrary about trial setting, granting continuances, and the amount of time allowed for disposition of civil cases.

The panel recommends amendments to rules and standards to insure that civil cases are considered individually on their merits and are managed in a more flexible and practical manner. The panel's proposals will be reviewed by the Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee and then by RUPRO, which will consider whether to circulate them for comment on an expedited basis. The Judicial Council would then consider the panel's final recommendations at its October 2003 meeting.

Discussion Agenda (Tabs 2-3)

Item 2 Report on Initial Meeting of Rural Court Judges Working Group on Administrative and Operational Efficiency (Discussion Only; No Action Required)
3:15-3:35 p.m.

Report on the initial meeting of the Rural Court Judges Working Group on Administrative and Operational Efficiency established in May 2003. The principal charge of the working group is to develop, for Judicial Council consideration, options and specific recommendations on the following issues:

- How can the transition to the statewide administrative infrastructure be accomplished in the rural courts in a timely, efficient, and effective manner?
- What is the most efficient way to provide administrative resources for rural courts for transactional support and for less frequently needed higher-level professional administrative support? How can this be effectively integrated into the state-level administrative structure? And what is the appropriate expectation for each rural court and for the regional office?
- What options are available to improve the sharing of judicial resources in rural courts (e.g., judges, retired or active; subordinate judicial officers; facilities)?

Presentation (5 minutes)

Speaker: Mr. Michael M. Roddy, Northern/Central Regional Office

Discussion/Council Action (15 minutes)

Item 3
3:35–4:35 p.m.

Judicial Council Jury Instructions and Accompanying Rules of Court and Standards of Judicial Administration: Approve Publication of Civil Instructions Prepared by the Task Force on Jury Instructions (adopt Cal. Rules of Court, rules 855, 6.58, and 6.59; amend rule 6.13; amend Cal. Stds. Jud. Admin., § 5) (Action Required)

The Task Force on Jury Instructions was charged with the task of drafting comprehensive, legally accurate jury instructions that are readily understood by the average juror. The civil subcommittee of the task force has completed its work on the civil jury instructions, which are slated for publication this fall. The Judicial Council must approve the instructions before they can be published. Additionally, the council should adopt rules of court designed to facilitate implementation and maintenance of the new instructions.

Presentation (15 minutes)

Speakers: Hon. Carol A. Corrigan
Court of Appeal, First Appellate District
Chair, Task Force on Jury Instructions
Hon. James D. Ward
Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District
Vice-Chair, Task Force on Jury Instructions
Ms. Lyn Hinegardner, Office of the General Counsel
Discussion/Council Action (45 minutes)

Circulating Orders Approved Since Last Business Meeting
[Circulating Orders Tab]

Judicial Council Appointment Orders Since Last Business Meeting
[Appointment Orders Tab]

4:35–4:50 p.m.

Break

4:50–5:40 p.m.

Executive Session following the close of the business meeting