

California Courts News Transcript

Title: Judicial Council Meeting

Date: August 30, 2010

California's superior courts are going to offer a heightened level of accountability and transparency on their operations and finances. At their public business meeting, the Judicial Council approved procedures for reporting the final results of audits in the courts. Audit reports will henceforth be available to the public on the court's website.

Michael Planet, Ventura Superior Court CEO "Audits from my perspective are not just good business but they're good government."

The Administrative Office of the Courts has been auditing since 2001.

While legislators have not yet passed a statewide budget, the Judicial Council must present budget concepts to the state department of finance now. Justice Huffman characterized the proposals as only procedural.

Hon. Richard Huffman, Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District "By this action we're not taking a dime from anybody under any circumstance. What we're doing, because of the deadline, is preserving the ability to have the conversation."

The Council was also reminded of ongoing structural deficits in some programs, like court appointed dependency counsel, and court interpreters.

Stephen Nash, AOC Finance Director "Security is another one. We're woefully short in some counties for a level of security. And all we're talking about is existing service levels."

Hon. Lee Smalley Edmon, Los Angeles Superior Court "I think as a branch as a whole we have to be looking at everything we've been doing and seeing how we're going to operate in the future and really come up with a plan B if you will, to figure out how we're going to fund these programs."

The council also approved a recommendation from the Commission on Impartial Courts to take a leadership role in improving civics education in the schools.

Hon. Ronald George, Chief Justice of California "The underpinning of democracy is the appreciation of the rule of law; without that we're not equipped to manage our own affairs let alone to export our system of democracy to other countries."

And Supreme Court Associate Justice Carlos Moreno had good news from the Commission on Foster Care. While the caseload is still much too high, there are fewer children now in foster care; and their length of stay is shorter. But there is still much to be done.

California Courts News Transcript

Hon. Carlos Moreno, California Supreme Court Associate Justice “Preventing placements when possible, reunifying families when appropriate, and finding permanent placements when removal cannot be avoided.”

The Office of Court Construction and Management presented an updated 5-year capital outlay plan for the branch. Priorities for new buildings and renovations are reviewed and adjusted every year.

The complete audiocast of the Judicial Council meeting is archived on the court’s website.

I’m Leanne Kozak reporting in San Francisco for California Courts News.

[END]