



News Release

Superior Court of California

County of San Francisco

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SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT AVOIDS DEVASTATING LAYOFFS THIS WEEK

Governor's Revised Budget, Proposed Revenue Package Rescues the Court from Moving Forward with Unprecedented Staff Reductions

SAN FRANCISCO – The San Francisco Superior Court is pleased to announce that proposals from Sacramento will allow the Court to maintain access to justice and delay plans to lay off employees.

The Court had planned this week to issue layoff notices to 23 percent of its staff, or 122 court employees, due to a projected \$11.8 million deficit for Fiscal year 2010-2011, which begins July 1. The Governor's May 14 Budget Revision and a legislative proposal have changed the Court's plans.

"Governor Schwarzenegger's revised budget restores \$100 million to the judicial branch, which will help stop the dismantling of the state's 58 trial courts that has occurred over the past year," Presiding Judge James J. McBride said. "The restoration of this funding is vital to assure that the judicial branch can avoid additional court closures in the upcoming fiscal year to preserve Californians' access to justice."

Another key element to remedy the judicial branch's funding crisis is a proposed \$230 million legislative package of revenue and redirection of other funds originally earmarked for infrastructure that would backfill severe reductions to the judicial branch budget that took effect last year.

"The Court recognizes that the revenue proposal will require the sustained and

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united efforts of the entire branch and its many justice partners to win its approval," Judge McBride said. "It is essential that we all work together to secure this funding. The San Francisco Superior Court will continue full operations and will continue to provide the best service and most complete access to justice that we can. We are convinced that we will provide the most support to those advocating for our budget by keeping our courtrooms open, efficient and accessible to all."

The Court, which has 591 authorized positions, currently has 60 vacancies due to a hiring freeze in place for more than a year. Over the past two years, the Court has relied on a combination of solutions to avoid layoffs, including nearly depleting its entire reserve of \$9 million, while absorbing cuts totaling \$13.2 million. The cuts have reduced the Court's \$90 million budget by 15 percent.

"The entire branch has been damaged badly by the budget cuts, and our Court cannot survive indefinitely on such reduced funding," Judge McBride said. "However, the Court is mindful that the entire state, its people and its government, are suffering through a terrible fiscal crisis. The San Francisco Superior Court recognizes that limits are the new order of the day and we will demonstrate our confidence in this budget and our hope for the future by working as hard as we can to provide more with less."

Judge McBride thanked Chief Justice Ronald M. George, William C. Vickrey, Administrative Director of the Courts, other key Administrative of the Courts' staff, lawmakers, and justice partners, for their tireless and successful efforts to restore funding to the judicial branch.

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