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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chief Justice Issues Statement in Response to the 2012-2013 Budget Act

SAN FRANCISCO—California Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye issued the following statement in response to the finalization of the 2012–2013 Budget Act:

“Yet another austere state budget, affecting all Californians and all public sectors of our state, forces the judicial branch to absorb another \$544 million cut in the coming fiscal year—representing four straight years of cuts. I opposed these cuts because—when added to the judiciary’s cuts of prior years—I fear they will have a deleterious impact on the ability of the courts to provide timely due process to the people of California. However, the impact of these additional cuts may be mitigated somewhat by a number of changes now reflected in the final budget. The Governor and the Legislature faced hard choices in balancing the state budget, and I appreciate their working with us in these very difficult circumstances. I thank the judicial branch leaders and the lawyer groups who advocated tirelessly and collaboratively for judicial branch resources.

“Critical to our ability to operate efficiently and with some predictability, trial courts will have two years to spend down fund balances instead of one year. This will greatly assist in judicial branch planning for the next two years. Beginning in fiscal year 2014–2015, trial courts may reserve up to one percent of their total allocation. The Legislature and Governor also largely adopted the trial court funding approach proposed by the Judicial Council.

“In an era of reduced appropriations to the judicial branch, the final budget supports our commitment to transparency and accountability as well as our effort to clarify judicial branch funding streams. The Trial Court Trust Fund will continue to be used for court operations, while a newly merged State Trial Court Improvement and Modernization Fund enables the Judicial Council to implement statewide initiatives and projects that improve efficiencies in court administration statewide.

“Now the judicial branch must continue the challenging task of making this budget work for all users of our court system. Branch leadership will meet now and in the weeks to come to continue to discuss and plan for these financial impacts. July 27 is the next scheduled meeting date for the

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Judicial Council to discuss the branch's concerns. The judicial branch is comprised of many incredibly talented, innovative, and thoughtful leaders dedicated to the rule of law and justice for all. I am confident that we will make it through these difficult times and emerge, in the end, a stronger branch."

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.