



## Judicial Council of California

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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June 29, 2009

Hon. Christine Kehoe, Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5050  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 131 (Evans), as amended June 15, 2009 – Fiscal Impact Statement  
Hearing: Senate Appropriations Committee – July 6, 2009

Dear Senator Kehoe:

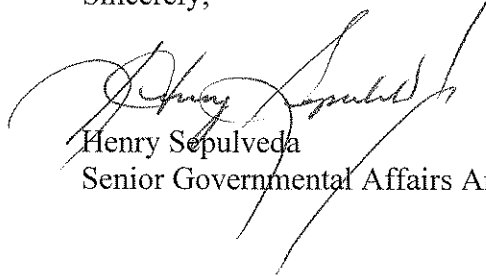
AB 131 directs the Judicial Council to establish a cost-recovery system authorizing courts to recover costs of appointed counsel who represent minors and/or responsible adults in dependency proceedings. This measure also authorizes courts to designate a financial evaluation officer to conduct evaluations to determine liability to reimburse courts for the cost of appointed counsel.

Based on a 2005-2007 Judicial Council-sponsored pilot project, 7-10 percent of parents were found to be able to afford an average payment of \$850 toward the cost of court-appointed counsel. Given that 56,000 parents are represented statewide, a new system-wide cost-recovery plan could generate up to \$5 million in annual funds. The collected funds would be used to hire additional legal counsel in dependency cases to reduce the existing per-attorney caseloads. The one-time administrative costs to the Judicial Council (to develop a standard for courts to use to determine clients' ability to pay) will be fully covered using the program's generated funds.

Hon. Christine Kehoe  
June 29, 2009  
Page 2

Please contact me at 916-323-3121 or [henry.sepulveda@jud.ca.gov](mailto:henry.sepulveda@jud.ca.gov) if you would like further information or have any questions about the fiscal impact of this legislation on the judicial branch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Henry Sepulveda", is written over the typed name and title.

Henry Sepulveda  
Senior Governmental Affairs Analyst

HS/yt

cc: Hon. Noreen Evans, Member of the Assembly  
Ms. Celia Mata, Legislative Director, Office of Assembly Member Noreen Evans  
Ms. Jacqueline Wong-Hernandez, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Mr. Matt Osterli, Consultant, Senate Republican Office of Policy  
Ms. Teresa Calvert, Budget Analyst, Department of Finance