



## Judicial Council of California

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

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*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

July 1, 2008

Hon. Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 3051 (Jones) – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The Judicial Council supports AB 3051, which will strengthen current requirements to ensure that children are able to attend and participate in their juvenile dependency proceedings.

The council supports this bill because it will enhance the ability of the court to ensure that children who are the subject of dependency proceedings are given meaningful opportunities to participate in those proceedings. The provisions of AB 3051 are consistent with the draft recommendations of the Judicial Council's California Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care, chaired by Supreme Court Justice Carlos Moreno. Included among the draft recommendations, which will be submitted to the Judicial Council in August, are the following:

- All participants in dependency hearings, including children and families, should have an opportunity to be heard in court.
- Local court practices should facilitate the attendance of children, parents, and caregivers in hearings.
- All participants should leave court hearings with a clear understanding of what happened there, why decisions were made, and if appropriate, what actions they need to take.
- The Administrative Office of the Courts should provide judicial officers and court participants with education and support to create courtroom environments that promote

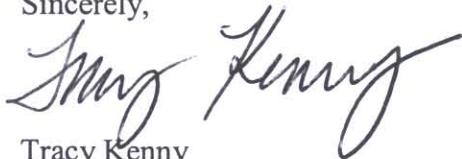
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communication with, and participation of, all parties, including children, that takes into account age, development, language, and cultural issues.

AB 3051 would support and advance these recommendations, which are intended to ensure that dependency courts are accessible to the parties to the proceedings. Because the statutory role of the dependency court is to protect the best interest of the children subject to its jurisdiction, it is critical that the court have an opportunity to hear from these children and communicate with them. Current law already authorizes that children be present, and requires the court to inquire as to whether children over age 10 received notice of the hearing. AB 3051 enhances those requirements, and gives the court the tools it needs to ensure that children who wish to attend have an opportunity to be heard.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council requests your signature on AB 3051.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Kenny", written in a cursive style.

Tracy Kenny  
Attorney

TK/yt

cc: Hon. Dave Jones, Member of the Assembly  
Mr. Chris Ryan, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Brent Jamison, Director of Legislation, Governor's Office of Planning and Research