



**Judicial Council of California**  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
770 L Street, Suite 1240 • Sacramento, California 95814-3368  
Telephone 916-323-3121 • Fax 916-323-4347 • TDD 415-865-4272

TANI G. CANTIL-SAKAUYE  
*Chief Justice of California*  
*Chair of the Judicial Council*

STEVEN JAHR  
*Administrative Director of the Courts*

CORY T. JASPERSON  
*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

March 25, 2014

Hon. Jimmy Gomez  
Member of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2176  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1657 (Gomez), as introduced – Support/Sponsor  
Hearing: Assembly Judiciary Committee – April 1, 2014

Dear Assembly Member Gomez:

The Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor AB 1657, which clarifies the ability of courts to provide foreign language interpreters in all cases, regardless of the income of the parties involved, and thanks you for authoring the bill.

Courts must provide interpreters to non-English speaking defendants in all criminal cases, including juvenile delinquency cases and traffic cases. In civil cases, however, interpreters must be provided in some cases, are provided by some courts, and are not in others. Statutory and case law require courts to provide interpreters in juvenile dependency cases, certain family law cases where the parties are indigent, and in some small claims cases where no volunteer or other free interpreters are available. In other cases, whether or not an interpreter is provided can depend on the size of the county, the availability of funds, and the local rules of the specific court.

These local rules, coupled with various interpretations of Government Code requirements, have led to some courts providing civil interpreters in some cases where they are not explicitly required, and other courts not providing them. The income of the parties can impact the ultimate decision as well. The Federal Department of Justice believes that courts are already required to

Hon. Jimmy Gomez

March 25, 2014

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provide these services. Without a clarification in the Government Code, however, individual courts are left to their own devices to decide how to interpret the Government Code's requirements. It is in the interest of Californians statewide to have a consistent application of the Government Code in every region of the state, which AB 1657 will provide.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council thanks you for your interest in and leadership on this issue, and is pleased to sponsor AB 1657.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alan Herzfeld', written in a cursive style.

Alan Herzfeld  
Associate Attorney

ANH/yc-s

cc: Ms. June Clark, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor



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March 25, 2014

Hon. Bob Wieckowski, Chair  
Assembly Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 4016  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1657 (Gomez), as introduced – Support/Sponsor  
Hearing: Assembly Judiciary Committee – April 1, 2014

Dear Assembly Member Wieckowski:

The Judicial Council supports and is sponsoring AB 1657, which clarifies the ability of courts to provide foreign language interpreters in all cases, regardless of the income of the parties involved.

Currently, courts must provide interpreters to non-English speaking defendants in all criminal cases, including juvenile delinquency cases and traffic cases. In civil cases, however, interpreters must be provided in some, but not all, cases, are provided by some courts, and are not provided in others. Statutory and case law require courts to provide interpreters in juvenile dependency cases, certain family law cases where the parties are indigent, and in some small claims cases where no volunteer or other free interpreters are available. In other cases, whether or not an interpreter is provided can depend on the size of the county, the availability of funds, and the local rules of the specific court.

These local rules, coupled with various interpretations of Government Code requirements, have led to some courts providing civil interpreters in some cases where they are not explicitly required, and other courts not providing them. The income of the parties can impact the ultimate

Hon. Bob Wieckowski

March 25, 2014

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decision as well. Without a clarification in the Government Code, however, individual courts are left to their own devices to decide how to interpret the Government Code's requirements. It is in the interest of Californians statewide to have a consistent application of the Government Code in every region of the state, which AB 1657 will provide.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council is sponsoring and supporting AB 1657.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'AHS', is written over a faint, larger signature that is mostly obscured.

Alan Herzfeld  
Associate Attorney

ANH/yc-s

cc: Members, Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Hon. Jimmy Gomez, Member of the Assembly  
Mr. Kevin Baker, Deputy Chief Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee  
Ms. June Clark, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Paul Dress, Consultant, Assembly Republican Office of Policy



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*Director, Office of Governmental Affairs*

May 30, 2014

Hon. Hannah-Beth Jackson, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5080  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1657 (Gomez), as amended April 29, 2014 – Support/Sponsor  
Hearing: Senate Judiciary Committee – June 17, 2014

Dear Senator Jackson:

The Judicial Council is pleased to be the sponsor of AB 1657, which, as originally envisioned, clarifies the ability of courts to provide foreign language interpreters in all cases, regardless of the income of the parties involved, and thanks you for authoring the bill.

Courts must provide interpreters to non-English speaking defendants in all criminal cases, including juvenile delinquency cases and traffic cases. In civil cases, however, interpreters must be provided in some cases, are provided by some courts, and are not in others. Statutory and case law require courts to provide interpreters in juvenile dependency cases, certain family law cases where the parties are indigent, and in some small claims cases where no volunteer or other free interpreters are available. In other cases, whether or not an interpreter is provided can depend on the size of the county, the availability of funds, and the local rules of the specific court.

These local rules, coupled with various interpretations of Government Code requirements, have led to some courts providing civil interpreters in some cases where they are not explicitly required, and other courts not providing them. The income of the parties can impact the ultimate decision as well. The Federal Department of Justice believes that courts are already required to

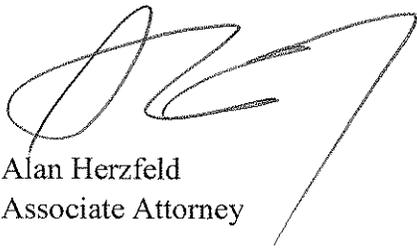
Hon. Hannah-Beth Jackson  
May 30, 2014  
Page 2

provide these services. Without a clarification in the Government Code, however, individual courts are left to their own devices to decide how to interpret the Government Code's requirements. It is in the interest of Californians statewide to have a consistent application of the Government Code in every region of the state, which AB 1657 will provide.

In light of the fact that there is not enough funding to provide interpreter services to all parties in all cases, the Judicial Council is supportive of providing courts with the flexibility to provide interpreter services, with the goal of increasing those services, while working around administrative issues. The council understands the Assembly Judiciary Committee's views of the types of cases and parties who should be prioritized, but notes that any such prioritization will require ongoing discussions with the federal Department of Justice, whose views are in line with the council's original goal.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council and is pleased to be the sponsor of AB 1657.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Herzfeld', written over a horizontal line.

Alan Herzfeld  
Associate Attorney

ANH/yc-s

cc: Members, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hon. Jimmy Gomez, Member of the Assembly  
Ms. Ronak Daylami, Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Ms. June Clark, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Mike Petersen, Consultant, Senate Republican Office of Policy



# JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA

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*Director, Governmental Affairs*

September 2, 2014

Hon. Edmund G. Brown, Jr.  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: AB 1657 (Gomez) – Request for Signature

Dear Governor Brown:

The Judicial Council is pleased to sponsor and support AB 1657. Courts must provide interpreters to non-English speaking defendants in all criminal cases, including juvenile delinquency cases and traffic cases. In civil cases, however, interpreters must be provided in some cases, are provided by some courts, and are not required by state law in others. Statutory and case law require courts to provide interpreters in juvenile dependency cases, certain family law cases where the parties are indigent, and in some small claims cases where no volunteer or other free interpreters are available. In other cases, whether or not an interpreter is provided can depend on the size of the county, the availability of funds, and the local rules of the specific court.

These local rules, coupled with various interpretations of Government Code requirements, have led to some courts providing civil interpreters in some cases where they are not explicitly required, and other courts not providing them. The income of the parties can impact the ultimate decision as well. The Federal Department of Justice believes that courts are already required to provide these services. Without a clarification in the Government Code, however, individual courts are left to their own devices to

decide how to interpret the Government Code's requirements. It is in the interest of all Californians to have a consistent application of the Government Code in every region of the state, which AB 1657 will provide.

In light of the fact that there is not enough funding to provide interpreter services to all parties in all cases, the Judicial Council is supportive of providing courts with the flexibility to provide interpreter services, with the ultimate goal of increasing those services. The bill ensures that the courts have a clear order of priority for which case types receive interpreter services when there are insufficient funds appropriated to provide interpreters to all parties in all cases. The bill before you is the result of over a year of negotiations between the Judicial Council, the Legislature, and stakeholders, and reflects the input from the Federal Department of Justice (DOJ).

AB 1657 represents a significant step towards the full provision of interpreter services in civil cases, while recognizing budgetary limitations. The implementation of AB 1657 will not require an appropriation, but instead merely clarifies how the funds already appropriated for interpreter services can be spent. As noted by the Department of Finance when the bill was before the Senate Appropriations Committee, AB 1657 will implement recommendations by DOJ, which will further assist the courts in the ongoing investigation by DOJ of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council respectfully requests your signature on AB 1657.

Sincerely,



Alan Herzfeld  
Associate Attorney

cc: Hon. Jimmy Gomez, Member of the Assembly  
Ms. June Clark, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor