Judicial Council *of* California

TRIBAL COURT–STATE COURT FORUM
MINUTES OF OPEN MEETING DRAFT

August 13, 2026

12:15-1:15 p.m.

Virtual

Members Present: Hon. Abby Abinanti, Cochair, Hon. Shama Mesiwala, Cochair, Hon. Yvette Ayala Henderson, Ms. Janet Bill, Hon. Michele Fahley, Hon. Benjamin Hanna, Mr. Christopher Haug, Hon. Jennifer Lee, Hon. Patricia Lenzi, Hon. Kristina Lindquist, Ms. S. Lynn Martinez, Hon. Nicholas Mazanec, Hon. April Olson, Hon. Karen Riess, Hon. Victorio Shaw, Hon. Gary Slossberg, Hon. Dean Stout, Hon. Alison Tucher, Hon. Juan Ulloa, and Hon. Zeke Zeidler.

Members Absent: Ms. Laila DeRouen, Hon. Leonard Edwards, Hon. Ana España, Hon. Devin Flesher, Hon. Dorothy McLaughlin, Hon. Stephen Place, Ms. Christina Snider-Ashtari, and Hon. Rebecca Wightman.

Others Present: Ms. Vida Castaneda, Ms. Audrey Fancy, Ms. Anne Hadreas, Mr. Cyrus Ip, Ms. Merri Lopez-Keifer, Ms. Amanda Morris, Ms. Terrie L. Robinson, Ms. Kristen Schmit, and Mr. Rodney Trevino.

OPEN MEETING

Call to Order and Roll Call

The chair called the meeting to order at 12:15 p.m. and took roll call.

Approval of Minutes

The advisory body reviewed and approved the minutes of the June 11, 2026, Tribal Court–State Court Forum meeting. Justice Shama Mesiwala moved to approve, and Judge Patricia Lenzi seconded the motion. Judges Kristina Lindquist and Jennifer Lee abstained from voting.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (ITEMS 1–3)

Item 1

Center for Indigenous Law and Justice (No Action Required)

Presenter: Ms. Merri Lopez-Keifer, Executive Director, Center for Indigenous Law & Justice, University of California Berkeley School of Law

Ms. Lopez-Keifer gave committee members an overview of the Center for Indigenous Law and Justice, their mission, history, and vision for partnering with the Forum on projects in the future. Their work closely aligns with the Forum's existing interests and members expressed interest in future collaborations.

Item 2

Tribal Court-State Court Forum Ad Hoc Work Groups (No Action Required)

Facilitator: Ms. Vida Castaneda, Senior Analyst, Judicial Council of California, Center for Families, Children & the Courts

Ms Vida Castaneda, on behalf of the ICWA ad hoc working group, provided members with a progress update on their education resources review project. The ICWA Inquiry Dependency Information Sheet and Check List and the Indian Child Welfare Act Inquiry Interview were updated in June of 2026 and posted to the ICWA Job Aids webpage. The work group will continue reviewing older written resources and updating the resources as needed.

Ms. Terrie L. Robinson, on behalf of the Tribal Court Orders Enforcement ad hoc working group, provided committee members with an update on their ongoing projects. Work on creating a new standardized form is in progress and will be presented to the committee upon completion.

Ms. Terrie L. Robinson, on behalf of the DUI on Tribal Lands ad hoc working group, updated committee members on their data collection project on how tribes are currently handling DUIs on tribal lands.

Item 3

2027 Annual Agenda (No Action Required)

Presenter: Terrie L. Robinson, Attorney, Judicial Council of California, Center for Families, Children & the Courts

Ms. Terrie L. Robinson presented to committee members a draft of the 2027 Annual Agenda and discussed possible new projects for consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Approved by the advisory body on enter date.

Legislative Update: Tribal Court State Court Forum
October 8, 2026

Chaptered Bills and Resolutions

AB 31 (Ramos) Peace officers: tribal police, Ch. 450, Statutes of 2026
Makes permanent the Tribal Police Program, a pilot program that provides specified tribal law enforcement officers state peace officer authority on Indian land and elsewhere in the state under specified circumstances. (PEN amend 830.83, 832.55, 11073, 11073.6; Repeal PEN 11073.5)

AB 152 (Committee on Budget), CH. 26 Human services
Establishes, upon an appropriation by the Legislature, the Tribal Foster Care Prevention Initiative to provide state funding to assist any federally recognized Indian tribe located in California, or with lands that extend into California, in funding the costs associated with services aimed at preserving families and preventing the entry of children into foster care. (WIC add 10553.16) [Note that 2.4 million was included in the budget for this purpose.]

AB 1581 (Ramos) Pupils: data reporting: American Indian and Alaska Native pupils, Ch. 881, Statutes of 2026
Requires the California Department of Education starting on July 1, 2028, and annually thereafter, to post, on its website, specified statewide aggregate educational outcome data for the prior school year for pupils who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native only, and pupils who identify as American Indian/Alaska Native in addition to another race or ethnicity. (EDC amend 33318.7)

AB 1688 (Carrillo) Child abuse or neglect: reporting, Ch. 888, Statutes of 2026
Requires a county welfare agency, within 36 hours, to notify the attorney representing a child's parent in dependency court when the agency substantiates a report of abuse or neglect that occurred in the child's out-of-home placement or when a child is removed from a placement due to abuse or neglect. Requires the agency to provide the same notice to all attorneys representing children with open dependency cases in that placement. Limits the notice to the fact that a report has been substantiated, barring disclosure of the reporting party's identity, anyone named in the report, and personal or confidential information. (PEN amend 11166.1)

AB 1824 (Ramos) Indian children: guardianship or conservatorship proceedings, Ch. 454, Statutes of 2026
Among other things, requires a court presiding over any guardianship or conservatorship proceeding that could result in placement of an Indian child with someone other than a parent or Indian custodian to inquire whether the child is or may

be an Indian child. Authorizes courts, upon request from a tribe, to permit the tribe to participate in a proceeding involving a child who would otherwise be an Indian child but is not because the child's tribe lacks federal recognition. Requires courts to appoint counsel for a parent or Indian custodian who cannot afford counsel and desires counsel in an Indian child custody proceeding. (PROB amend 1460, 1474, 1510, 1511, 1513, 1513.2, 1516.5, 2250; add 1459.1, 1459.2, 1459.3, 1459.4, 1459.6, 1459.7; repeal 1460.2, 1500.1; repeal and add 1449, 1459, 1459.5.) 8/19

AB 2115 (Ramos) California Native Americans: formal apology, Ch. 448, Statutes of 2026

Makes findings and declarations detailing the State's history of perpetuating harm against Native Americans through policies that were enacted, sanctioned, or tolerated by the Legislature and provides that the State of California recognizes and accepts responsibility for all the harms and atrocities committed by its representatives who promoted, permitted, facilitated, and enforced policies of violence against California Native Americans, which has left an enduring legacy of trauma and has led to the destruction of important cultural and spiritual sites, and recognizes the irreparable harms it has caused to its tribal communities. Requires the Legislature to prepare the formal apology, which shall bear the Great Seal of the State and requests that this apology be signed by the Speaker of the Assembly, the President pro Tempore of the Senate, the Governor, and the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court, and it requires the Secretary of State to submit a final copy of this apology to the State Archives, where it shall be available to the public for viewing in perpetuity. (GOV add 8304 et. seq)

AB 2478 (Schultz) Kinship family approval, Ch. 611, Statutes of 2026

Requires the California Department of Social Services, on or before July 1, 2028, to adopt a Kinship Family Approval process to approve a relative, nonrelated extended family member, or extended family member of an Indian child to be a kinship family, defined as an individual or family who has successfully met the home environment assessment and family engagement standards necessary for providing care for a child placed by a county child welfare department or a probation department by court order or voluntarily placed by a parent or legal guardian. (Amend EDC 49069.3, 49076, 56055, and 56155.5; FAM amend 6552, 8609, 8704.5, 8708, and 9201 of, and to repeal Section 9203.1; GOV amend 7930.165, 7930.190, and 30029.7; HSC amend 1501.1, 1502, 1505, 1506, 1506.1, 1506.5, 1506.9, 1507.25, 1517, 1517.2, 1517.3, 1520, 1520.3, 1522.08, 1522.1, 1522.4, 1522.44, 1523.1, 1524, 1524.01, 1527, 1527.1, 1527.2, 1527.4, 1527.5, 1530.5, 1530.7, 1536, 1536.2, 1538, 1558, 1559.110, 1568.26, and 115725, add amend, repeal and add 1522, and repeal 1506.6, 1506.7, 1506.8, and 1517.1; INS amend 676.7; PEN amend 11105.2, 11165.7, 11167.5, and 11170; PROB amend 1541 and 1543; WIC amend 224.1, 291, 293, 294, 295, 309, 319, 361, 361.2, 361.4, 361.45, 362.04, 366.1, 366.3, 366.31, 628, 706.5, 706.6, 727, 727.05, 727.12, 727.4, 827, 4684, 10553.12, 10952.5, 11362, 11363, 11386, 11391, 11400, 11402, 11461, 11461.3, 11461.36, 11461.6, 11462, 11462.01, 11463, 16003.5, 16119, 16120, 16161, 16501.01, 16501.02, 16501.1, 16504.5, 16507.5, 16514, 16519, 16519.3, 16519.501, 16519.502, 16519.51, 16519.52, 16519.53, 16519.54, 16519.55,

16519.555, 16519.56, 16519.57, 16519.6, 16521.6, 16563, 16565, 17710, 17730, 17731, 17736, and 18250, amend, repeal and add 16519.5, add 16519.605 and 16519.615, and repeal and add 16519.4)

AB 2507 (Nguyen) Office of Tribal Affairs, Ch. 449, Statutes of 2026
Renames the Office of the Governor's Tribal Advisor to the Office of Tribal Affairs and expands its responsibilities for facilitating state agencies' engagement with tribal governments. Requires each state agency that engages or has services affecting tribal governments to adopt tribal consultation policies and designate dedicated liaisons. (GOV amend 12012.3)

ACR 163 (Ramos, D) Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Month, Ch. 109, Statutes of 2026
Designates the month of May 2026 as California's Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Month.

Legislation of Interest that Was Not Enacted

AB 1574 (Rogers) The Tribal Foster Care Prevention Program – HELD By Senate Appropriations Committee But Provisions included in AB 152 Budget trailer bill above
Establishes the Tribal Foster Care Prevention Program to provide funding to assist any federally recognized Indian tribe located in California, or with lands that extend into California, in funding the costs associated with services aimed at preserving families and preventing the entry of children into foster care. The bill would require an Indian tribe that seeks funding for this purpose to submit an annual letter of interest to the department.

AB 1881 (Ramos) **California Indian Freedom Act of 2026 – VETOED by the Governor**
Establishes a framework for California Native American tribes to exercise their religious beliefs or spiritual practices on state lands, and requires a governmental agency to obtain free, prior, and informed consent of any affected tribe before undertaking any project action on state lands that may pose a risk to sacred sites. Provisions become effective January 1, 2028. (GOV amend, repeal, and add Section 7930.205; add PRC 5097.1000 et. seq)
In his veto message the Governor included the following explanation:

> This bill would prohibit a government agency from burdening a California Native American tribe's exercise of religious beliefs or spiritual practices on state lands, even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, unless the agency shows that doing so is the least restrictive means of furthering a compelling governmental interest. This bill would also require a government agency to obtain written consent from an affected tribe before undertaking any physical change to a state land if the action may pose a risk to a sacred site.

I am sympathetic to the goals of this measure. However, this legislation's proposed framework could have far-reaching impacts on the basic operations of state government and the management of state property, and this uncertainty calls for further discussion and review. I encourage the author to continue his work to refine these concepts, and I call on state agencies to be part of that conversation.

SB 891 (Cervantes) Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program – VETOED by the Governor

Establishes The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Justice Program within the Department of Justice to facilitate collaboration between parties in cases of missing and murdered indigenous people. (GOV add 15008)

In his veto message the Governor included the following explanation:

> The MMIP crisis is a worldwide issue, recognized in several nations across the globe. As the state with the largest American Indian and Alaska Native population, exceeding 700,000 people, California has taken multiple actions to respond to this urgent public safety and human rights crisis. I have signed numerous bills, including legislation creating the "Feather Alert," a statewide emergency notification system for missing Indigenous people, and, in the 2022 Budget Act, established the MMIP Grant Program to provide California tribal nations with funding to investigate, track, and prevent cases involving missing and murdered Indigenous individuals.
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> Since its inception, the state has allocated tens of millions of dollars to the MMIP Grant Program and, in this year's budget, we made that funding permanent with a $15 million ongoing allocation. This historic investment reflects the need for sustained action - and California's continued commitment - to confront the disproportionate violence affecting Native communities. While well-intentioned, this bill disregards those efforts and creates a new, unfunded program that is duplicative of the work already underway.