

Judicial Council of California

520 Capitol Mall, Suite 600 · Sacramento, California 95814-4717

Telephone 916-323-3121 · Fax 916-323-4347

PATRICIA GUERRERO

*Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council*

MICHELLE CURRAN

Administrative Director

May 29, 2026

Hon. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas
Chair, Senate Labor, Public Employment,
and Retirement Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 6740
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Assembly Bill 1844 (Pacheco), as amended March 19, 2026 – Support
Hearing: Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee—June 10, 2026

Dear Senator Smallwood-Cuevas:

The Judicial Council is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1844 (Pacheco), which updates the Judges' Retirement System II (JRS II) to allow judges to designate a non-spouse beneficiary to receive survivor retirement benefits and to extend existing survivor protections to all vested judges.

Assembly Bill 1844 ensures that all judges have the same access to survivor benefits for their loved ones on an equal basis and thereby assists the branch in recruiting and retaining a diverse and highly qualified bench. Under current law, judges who are unmarried are at a disadvantage relative to those who are married in providing support for their heirs if they outlive them. Similarly, judges who are vested by virtue of reaching age 70 and at least 5 years of service cannot provide the same level of survivor benefit as those who are vested by reaching age 65 with 20 years of service. Assembly Bill 1844 will remedy those inequities in an actuarially neutral manner to ensure that these features of JRS II do not provide a disincentive to taking or continuing judicial service for those judges who are unable to access these survivor benefits under existing law.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council supports AB 1844.

Hon. Lola Smallwood-Cuevas

May 29, 2026

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Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Tracy Kenny at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,



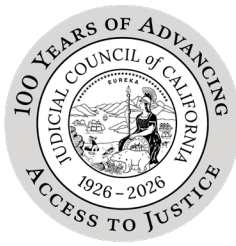
Cory T. Jaspersen

Director

Judicial Council Governmental Affairs

CJ/TK/lmm

cc: Members, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
Hon. Blanca Pacheco, Member of the Assembly, 64th District
Glenn Miles, Consultant, Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee
Matthew Fleming, Deputy Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
Cliff Costa, Legislative Advocate, California Judges Association
Michelle Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California



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PATRICIA GUERRERO

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MICHELLE CURRAN

Administrative Director

May 20, 2026

Hon. Blanca Pacheco
Member of the Assembly, District 64
1021 O Street, Suite 4510
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Assembly Bill 1844 (Pacheco), as amended March 19, 2026 – Support

Dear Assembly Member Pacheco:

The Judicial Council is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1844 (Pacheco), which updates the Judges' Retirement System II (JRS II) to allow judges to designate a non-spouse beneficiary to receive survivor retirement benefits and to extend existing survivor protections to all vested judges.

Assembly Bill 1844 ensures that all judges have the same access to survivor benefits for their loved ones on an equal basis and thereby assists the branch in recruiting and retaining a diverse and highly qualified bench. Under current law, judges who are unmarried are at a disadvantage relative to those who are married in providing support for their heirs if they outlive them. Similarly, judges who are vested by virtue of reaching age 70 and at least 5 years of service cannot provide the same level of survivor benefit as those who are vested by reaching age 65 with 20 years of service. Assembly Bill 1844 will remedy those inequities in an actuarially neutral manner to ensure that these features of JRS II do not provide a disincentive to taking or continuing judicial service for those judges who are unable to access these survivor benefits under existing law.

For these reasons, the Judicial Council supports AB 1844.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,

Tracy Kenny
Supervising Attorney
Judicial Council Governmental Affairs

TK/Imm

cc: Matthew Fleming, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor
Cliff Costa, Legislative Advocate, California Judges Association
Michelle Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California