



MEDIA ADVISORY

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Judicial Council to Consider Impartial Courts Commission Recommendations

Council Will Also Consider Reports of the Elkins Family Law Task Force and Domestic Violence Task Force

San Francisco—The Judicial Council of California will hold a public business meeting from 8:30 a.m. to 12:50 p.m. on Friday, April 23, 2010, at the Judicial Council Conference Center, Hiram W. Johnson State Office Building, Third Floor, 455 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco.

Chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, the council is the administrative policymaking body of the California courts. The meeting will be audiocast live on the California Courts Web site at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/>. Meeting materials are now available at <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age20100226.pdf>.

A summary of reports on the meeting agenda follows:

Judicial Elections: The Implementation Committee of the Commission for Impartial Courts recommends that the Judicial Council endorse recommendations in the commission's final report for the formation of unofficial state and local fair judicial elections committees and development of a model campaign conduct code for judicial elections. The Committee also recommends amending the Code of Judicial Ethics for the disqualification of a judge for a public statement that reasonably appears to commit the judge to reach a particular result or ruling in a court proceeding and to prohibit judicial candidates from seeking endorsements from political organizations. The ethics recommendations would be referred to the California Supreme Court for further action. The recommendations are a product of more than two years of study and outreach by an 88-member commission. The recommendations are designed to elevate standards of judicial candidate campaign conduct, tighten judicial finance regulations, improve methods of judicial selection

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and retention, and increase transparency and better educate the public about the judicial branch.

Family Law Reforms: The council will consider the final report of the Elkins Family Law Task Force and decide whether to direct the Administrative Director of the Courts to prepare an implementation plan. The task force's 21 main recommendations would establish more efficient and effective procedures to ensure justice, fairness, due process and safety; more effective child custody procedures, ensure meaningful access to justice for all litigants; enhance the status of, and respect for, family law litigants and the family law process through judicial leadership; and lay the foundation for future innovations. The recommendations are the product of nearly two years of review, public hearings and outreach to all those with a stake in family courts.

Relinquishment of firearms: The council will consider a recommendation by the Domestic Violence Practice and Procedure Task Force for the adoption of a court rule to provide a procedure for the trial courts issuing criminal protective orders in domestic violence cases to use to assist in determining whether a defendant has complied with a court order to relinquish or sell any firearms that the defendant owns, possesses or controls.

Trial Court Funding: The council will also consider a recommendation by the Administrative Office of the Courts that the council advocate, on an urgent basis, with the Legislature and the Governor for sufficient funding to ensure that courts remain open every business day of the year. The AOC also recommends that the council not advocate, at this time, for redirection of substantial funding from the State Court Facilities Construction Fund to offset funding reductions to trial court operations.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and ensures leadership and excellence in court administration.