

NEWS RELEASE

**Los Angeles Superior Court
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L.A. SUPERIOR COURT PRESIDING JUDGE ADDRESSES GOV. BROWN'S 2014-15 BUDGET

Statement from Presiding Judge David S. Wesley

Today, I along with Assistant Presiding Judge Carolyn Kuhl and Executive Officer/Clerk Sherri R. Carter, issued the following statement in response to the Governor's proposed budget.

The Governor's budget proposal released today includes an increase of \$100 million for trial court operations. We are heartened that Governor Jerry Brown recognizes that, after sharing so much of the devastating cuts to state government over the past 5 years, the trial courts should be part of the investment he is making in shoring up California's infrastructure.

This is the beginning of the budget process, not the end. So we cannot be certain what the Governor's proposal will mean for our Court for several months.

Nonetheless, it is important to put this proposal in context. As currently stated, the increased funding may prove adequate to cover our Court's existing unfunded costs and anticipated cost increases for the next fiscal year. If there is funding available after covering those costs, our first priority would be to sufficiently staff the Consolidation Plan we put in place last Spring. Under the Consolidation Plan, our Court maintains courtrooms in every case type, continues to provide self-help services, maintains access to domestic violence and civil harassment orders, and otherwise maintains the full spectrum of adjudicative functions (including, for instance, small claims).

Unfortunately, given a required 25% reduction in staff, we are only able to maintain access to justice at the price of widespread delays and backlogs. Any additional available funding, combined with the aggressive program of reengineering and restructuring currently underway, should allow our Court to significantly reduce the largest and most troubling backlogs and delays.

We remain committed to providing the level of accessibility to justice in the Los Angeles Superior Court that litigants, attorneys and the public deserve and we hope that this budget year proves to be the first step down that path."

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