



# Judicial Council of California

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## REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

*Item No.: 23-130*

For business meeting on September 19, 2023

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**Title**

Criminal Law: Circumstances in Aggravation

**Agenda Item Type**

Action Required

**Rules, Forms, Standards, or Statutes Affected**

Revise form CR-101

**Effective Date**

January 1, 2024

**Recommended by**

Criminal Law Advisory Committee  
Hon. Brian M. Hoffstadt, Chair

**Date of Report**

July 18, 2023

**Contact**

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### Executive Summary

The Criminal Law Advisory Committee recommends revisions to the optional Judicial Council felony plea form to reflect statutory changes regarding the right to trial on aggravating circumstances in order to justify imposition of the upper term of a criminal offense or enhancement, and to improve consistency throughout the form.

### Recommendation

The Criminal Law Advisory Committee recommends that the Judicial Council, effective January 1, 2024, revise *Plea Form, With Explanations and Waiver of Rights—Felony* (form CR-101) to reflect statutory changes regarding the right to a trial on circumstances in aggravation and to make technical changes to improve consistency throughout the form.

The proposed revised form is attached at pages 4–10.

### Relevant Previous Council Action

The Judicial Council approved optional form CR-101, effective January 1, 2007, to promote increased uniformity in felony plea waiver forms used throughout the state. Form CR-101 was

last substantively revised, effective March 1, 2023, to reflect statutory changes to the definition of a firearm under Assembly Bill 1621 (Stats. 2022, ch. 76).

## **Analysis/Rationale**

Senate Bill 567 (Stats. 2021, ch. 731) amended Penal Code sections 1170 and 1170.1 to state that a court may impose an upper term of custody for a criminal offense or enhancement if aggravating factors were found true beyond a reasonable doubt at trial or on stipulation by the defendant, with specified exceptions. A court requested a revision of the optional felony plea form to reflect these statutory changes.

Appellate courts remain divided about whether section 1170(b) applies to plea agreements (compare *People v. Mitchell* (2022) 83 Cal.App.5th 1051, 1057–1058 [statute does not apply to negotiated plea deals], review granted Dec. 14, 2022, S277314, and *People v. Sallee* (2023) 88 Cal.App.5th 330, 335–338 [statute does not apply to negotiated plea deals], review granted April 26, 2023, S278690, with *People v. Todd* (2023) 88 Cal.App.5th 373, 377–378 [statute applies to negotiated plea deals], review granted April 26, 2023, S279154). Notwithstanding this unresolved issue, the committee believes that making findings about circumstances in aggravation as part of the guilty or no contest plea, when relevant, would be the safest course to preserve the record. Therefore, the committee has added “circumstances in aggravation” to the plea form as an additional category.

In addition to the changes in response to SB 567, the committee changed some descriptive terms in the form for better clarity and consistency. The current plea form includes sentencing considerations for prior convictions, enhancements, and alternate sentencing schemes (the latter referred to as “allegations” or “special allegations”). However, the form characterizes those considerations collectively as “allegations” in some sections and as “prior convictions, enhancements, and special allegations” in others. These references are inconsistent and interspersed throughout the form. The proposal would improve consistency by consistently specifying “prior convictions,” “enhancements,” “allegations,” and “circumstances in aggravation” when relevant.

The proposal would also replace the term “special allegations” with “allegations.” The committee thought the term “special allegations” could be confused with special circumstances as defined in Penal Code section 190.2. Further, the committee agreed that, in practice, “allegations” is the common term in use to refer to alternative sentencing schemes.

## **Policy implications**

This proposal has no major policy implications because the recommendation is to implement new legislation and improve consistency within the form.

## **Comments**

This proposal circulated for comment from March 30 to May 12, 2023. The committee received two comments agreeing with the proposal from the Superior Court of Orange County and the

Orange County Bar Association. A chart of the comments received and the committee's responses is attached at page 11.

### **Alternatives considered**

The committee did not consider the alternative of taking no action, determining that it was important to revise the form to implement statutory changes.

In discussing replacing “special allegations” with “allegations,” some committee members were concerned that “allegations” was too broad a term and could be interpreted to apply to the alleged charges or everything alleged in the complaint, rather than just an alternative sentencing scheme. However, the committee ultimately agreed that the manner in which “allegations” was used in the plea form—alongside prior convictions, enhancements, and circumstances in aggravation—sufficiently conveyed its meaning.

### **Fiscal and Operational Impacts**

As an optional form, expected costs should be limited to training, possible case management system updates, and the production of new forms. No other implementation requirements or operational impacts are expected.

### **Attachments and Links**

1. Form CR-101, at pages 4–10
2. Chart of comments, at page 11

ATTORNEY OR PARTY WITHOUT ATTORNEY NAME: FIRM NAME: STREET ADDRESS: CITY: STATE: ZIP CODE: TELEPHONE NO.: FAX NO.: EMAIL ADDRESS: ATTORNEY FOR (name):	FOR COURT USE ONLY  <b>07/17/2023</b> <b>DRAFT</b> <b>Not approved by</b> <b>the Judicial Council</b>
SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF STREET ADDRESS: MAILING ADDRESS: CITY AND ZIP CODE: BRANCH NAME:	
PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v. Defendant:	CASE NUMBER:
<b>PLEA FORM, WITH EXPLANATIONS AND WAIVER OF RIGHTS—FELONY</b>	

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- (1) Fill out this form only if you want to plead guilty or no contest.
- (2) Read this form carefully. For each item, if you understand and agree with what you read, put your initials in the box to the right of the item. For any item that does not apply to you or that you do not understand, leave the box blank.
- (3) On page 6, sign and date the form under "DEFENDANT'S STATEMENT."
- (4) Keep in mind that the court cannot give legal advice. If you have any questions about anything in this form, ask your attorney.

1. **CHARGES AND MAXIMUM TERM.** I want to plead guilty or no contest ("nolo contendere") to the charges and admit the following prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed below. I understand that the minimum and maximum penalties for the charges to which I am pleading guilty or no contest are listed below. INITIALS

COUNT	CHARGES (SECTION & DESCRIPTION)	YEARS / MONTHS		PRIOR CONVICTIONS, ENHANCEMENTS, ALLEGATIONS & CIRCUMSTANCES IN AGGRAVATION (SECTION & DESCRIPTION)	YEARS / MONTHS		TOTAL MAXIMUM TIME
		MINIMUM	MAXIMUM		MINIMUM	MAXIMUM	
<b>AGGREGATE MAXIMUM TIME OF IMPRISONMENT</b>							

2. **PLEA AGREEMENT.** I understand that I must tell the court on this form about any promises anyone has made to me about the sentence I will receive or the sentence recommendations that will be made to the court. My attorney, the court, or the prosecutor has explained to me that if I plead guilty or no contest to the charges and admit the prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed above, the court will sentence me as follows:

- a. Check one: ☐ **State Prison** (or the Division of Juvenile Justice) ☐ **County Jail** for INITIALS
- (1) ☐ years and ☐ months or
- (2) ☐ not less than ☐ years and ☐ months and/or not more than ☐ years and ☐ months.
- (3) ☐ Other (specify):
- b. **Probation** for ☐ years under conditions to be set by the court, including
- ☐ days in the **county jail** or
- ☐ up to ☐ days in the **county jail**.

I understand that a violation of any of the conditions of probation, including failure to complete a drug education or treatment program, if ordered by the court, may cause the court to send me to **county jail or state prison** for up to the **"Aggregate Maximum Time of Imprisonment"** specified in item 1, which may include a period of mandatory supervision under Penal Code section 1170(h)(5)(B) if the court sends me to county jail.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

CASE NUMBER:

Defendant(s):

INITIALS

2. c. **Split Sentence (1170(h)(5)(B)):**        years and        days in the county jail and        years and        days on mandatory supervision under conditions set by the court. I understand that if I violate any of the terms or conditions of mandatory supervision, I may be remanded into custody for the entire unserved portion of the sentence.

d. **Open Plea**

- (1) ☐ I understand the maximum and minimum sentences for the charges, **enhancements**, and allegations stated on page 1. No one has made any other promises to me about what sentence the court may order.
- (2) ☐ I understand that I am not eligible for probation.
- (3) ☐ I understand that I will not be granted probation unless the court finds at the time of sentencing that this is an unusual case where the interests of justice would be best served by granting probation.

e. **Restitution, Statutory Fees, and Assessments**

I understand that the court will order me to pay the following amounts (if an amount is not yet known, "TBD" for "to be determined" is entered next to the \$); I must prepare financial disclosure statements to assist the court in determining my ability to pay; and refusal or failure to prepare the required financial disclosure statements may be used against me at sentencing:

- (1) ☐ \$        **to the Victim Restitution Fund**
- (2) ☐ \$        **restitution to actual victims**
- (3) ☐ \$        **restitution to the State of California, Victims of Crime Fund**
- (4) ☐ \$        **court operations assessment**
- (5) ☐ \$        **court facilities assessment**
- (6) ☐ \$        **base fine plus any applicable penalties, assessments, and surcharges**
- (7) ☐ \$        **other (specify):**
- (8) ☐ \$        **other (specify):**
- (9) ☐ An (additional) amount to be determined by the court at sentencing or such other hearing as the court may set.

f. **Fines for Revocation of Parole, Postrelease Community Supervision, Mandatory Supervision, or Probation**

I understand that if I am sentenced to **state prison**, the court **will** impose a parole revocation fine or a postrelease community supervision revocation fine, which will be collected only if my parole or postrelease community supervision is later revoked. I also understand that if I am granted probation or mandatory supervision, the court **will** impose a probation revocation fine or mandatory supervision revocation fine, which will be collected only if my probation or mandatory supervision is later revoked.

g. **Dismissal of Other Counts**

I understand that as part of the plea agreement bargain, the following counts will be dismissed after sentencing:

I understand and agree that the sentencing judge may consider facts underlying dismissed counts to determine restitution and to sentence me on the counts to which I am entering a plea.

h. **Other Terms (specify):**

3. **CONSEQUENCES OF MY PLEA**

INITIALS

a. **No Contest ("Nolo Contendere") Plea**

I understand that a no contest plea is the same as pleading guilty and that if I plead no contest, I will be convicted and my no contest plea could be used against me in a civil case.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

CASE NUMBER:

Defendant(s):

INITIALS

3. b. **Parole and Postrelease Community Supervision**I understand that if I am sentenced to **state prison**

- (1) I will be placed on parole or postrelease community supervision for up to \_\_\_\_\_ years after my release.
- (2) if I abscond or the court tolls my supervision, the total time of parole or postrelease community supervision can be extended.
- (3) if I violate any of the terms or conditions of my parole, I can be sentenced to county jail for up to 180 days for each violation, or returned to state prison for up to one year, up to a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ years. If I violate any of the terms or conditions of postrelease community supervision, I can be sentenced to county jail for up to 180 days for each violation, for up to a maximum of 3 years.

c. **Effect of Conviction on Other Cases**

I understand that a conviction in this case may constitute a violation of any other current grant of parole, mandatory supervision, postrelease community supervision, or probation in any other case and that I may receive additional punishment as a result of that violation.

d. **Registration**

I understand that I will be required to register with the local police agency or sheriff's department in the city or county in which I reside as

- (1) ☐ an arson offender                      (3) ☐ a sex offender **(this registration is a lifelong requirement)**
- (2) ☐ a gang member                      (4) ☐ Other *(specify)*:

and that if I fail to register or to keep my registration current for any reason, new felony criminal charges may be filed against me.

e. **Prints and DNA Samples**

I understand that I must provide biological samples and prints for identification purposes—including buccal (mouth) swab samples, right thumb prints, palm prints of each hand, and blood specimens or other biological samples required by law—and that failure to do so constitutes a new criminal offense.

f. **Serious or Violent Felony**

- (1) ☐ I understand that by pleading guilty or no contest to a serious or violent felony ("strike"), the penalty for any future felony conviction will be increased as a result of my conviction in this case, depending on the number of strikes I have, up to a mandatory prison sentence of double the term otherwise provided or a term of at least 25 years to life.
- (2) ☐ I understand that if I am convicted of a violent felony, jail or prison conduct/work-time credit I may accrue will not exceed 15 percent.
- (3) ☐ I understand that if I am admitting a prior strike conviction, prison work-time credit that I may accrue will not exceed 20 percent of the total term of imprisonment.
- (4) ☐ I understand that if I am convicted of murder or a third felony conviction of certain offenses, I am ineligible to receive work-time credits. Count \_\_\_\_\_ is such an offense.

g. **Prior Prison Term for Sexually Violent Offense**

I understand that if I am sentenced to serve a state prison term for this sexually violent offense, as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code section 6600(b), the penalty for any future felony conviction may be increased as a result of my incarceration in this case.

h. **Driver's License and Vehicle Forfeiture**

I understand that my privilege to drive a motor vehicle may be revoked or suspended by the court or the California Department of Motor Vehicles and my vehicle may be ordered forfeited if it was involved in the offense.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

Defendant(s):

CASE NUMBER:

3. i. **Immigration Consequences**

I understand that if I am not a citizen of the United States, my plea of guilty or no contest may result in my deportation, exclusion from admission to the United States, or denial of naturalization under the laws of the United States.

INITIALS

j. **Firearms (Guns), Firearm Parts, and Ammunition Prohibition**

I understand that federal and state laws prohibit a convicted felon from possessing firearms (guns), firearm parts, or ammunition for life. This includes firearm receivers and frames, and any item that may be used as or easily turned into a receiver or frame (see Penal Code section 16531).

k. **Other Consequences** (*specify*):4. **RIGHT TO AN ATTORNEY**

I understand that I have the right to an attorney of my choice to represent me throughout the proceedings. If I cannot afford to hire an attorney, the court will appoint one to represent me.

**I hereby give up my right to be represented by an attorney.**

5. **OTHER CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS**

I understand that I am entitled to each of the following rights as to the charges, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed in item 1 (on page 1):

a. **Right to a Jury Trial**

I understand that I have a right to a speedy and public jury trial. At the trial, I would be presumed to be innocent, and I could not be convicted unless, after hearing all of the evidence, 12 impartial jurors chosen from the community were unanimously convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that I am guilty. I have a right, through my counsel, to participate in jury selection.

b. **Right to a Court Trial**

I understand that, as an alternative to a jury trial, if the prosecutor agrees, I may give up a jury trial and have a court trial in which the judge alone, without a jury, hears the evidence. I still could not be convicted unless, after hearing all of the evidence, the judge was convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that I am guilty.

c. **Right to Confront and Cross-Examine Witnesses**

I understand that I have the right to confront and cross-examine all witnesses testifying against me. This means that the prosecution must produce the witnesses in court, they must testify under oath in my presence, and my attorney may question them.

d. **Right to Remain Silent and Not to Incriminate Myself**

I understand that I have the right to remain silent, and my silence cannot be considered as evidence against me. I understand that I also have the right not to incriminate myself, and I cannot be forced to testify.

e. **Right to Produce Evidence and to Present a Defense**

I understand that I have a right to present evidence and to have the court issue subpoenas to bring to court all witnesses and evidence favorable to me, at no cost to me. I also have the right to testify on my own behalf.

6. **BEFORE THE PLEA**a. **Discussion With My Attorney**

**Before entering this plea, I have had a full opportunity to discuss the following with my attorney:**

- (1) The facts of my case;
- (2) The elements of the charged offenses, prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation;
- (3) Any defenses that I may have;
- (4) My constitutional and statutory rights and waiver of those rights;
- (5) The consequences of this plea, including the immigration consequences; and
- (6) Anything else I think is important to my case.

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

CASE NUMBER:

Defendant(s):

6. b. **Questions**

I have no further questions of the court or of my attorney with regard to my plea and admissions in this case, any of the rights, or anything else on this form.

INITIALS

c. **Stipulation to Commissioner**

I understand that I have the right to have a judge take my plea and sentence me. I give up this right and agree to have a commissioner, sitting as a temporary judge, take my plea and sentence me.

d. **Medications or Controlled Substances**

I am not taking any medication that affects my ability to understand this form and the consequences of my plea, have not recently consumed any alcohol or drugs, and am not suffering from any medical condition, except for the following:

e. **Court Approval of Plea Agreement**

I understand that the plea agreement in item 2 (on pages 1 and 2) is based on the facts before the court. I understand that if the court approves this plea agreement, the approval of the court is not binding, and that the court may withdraw its approval of the plea agreement upon further consideration of the matter. I understand that if the court withdraws its approval of this plea agreement, I will be allowed to withdraw my plea. (Pen. Code, § 1192.5.)

7. **STATUTORY RIGHT TO A PRELIMINARY HEARING**

I understand that before I have a trial, the law gives me the right to a speedy preliminary hearing at which the prosecution would produce evidence and the court must find reasonable cause to believe I committed the crimes with which I have been charged. I understand that I have all of the above constitutional rights at the preliminary hearing, except for the right to a jury trial.

I give up my right to a preliminary hearing and the constitutional rights listed in item 5 (on page 4).

8. **WAIVER OF CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY RIGHTS**

I give up, for each of the charges, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed in item 1 (on page 1), my right to a jury trial, my right to a court trial, my right to confront and cross-examine witnesses, my right to remain silent and not to incriminate myself, and my right to produce evidence and to present a defense, including my right to testify on my own behalf. I understand that I am, in fact, incriminating myself with my plea.

9. **THE PLEA**

I freely and voluntarily plead ☐ GUILTY ☐ NO CONTEST to the charges listed in item 1 (on page 1) and admit the prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed in item 1 (on page 1), understanding that this plea and admission will lead to the penalties listed in item 2 (on pages 1 and 2).

a. I offer my plea of guilty or no contest freely and voluntarily and with full understanding of everything in this form. No one has made any threats; used any force against me, my family, or my loved ones; or made any promises to me, except as listed in this form, in order to convince me to plead guilty or no contest.

b. I understand that the court is required to find a factual basis for my plea to make sure that I am entering a plea to the proper offenses under the facts of the case.

I offer to the court the following as the basis for my plea of guilty or no contest and any admissions:

(1) I understand that the court may consider the following as proof of the factual basis for my plea:

- (a) ☐ Preliminary hearing transcript
- (b) ☐ Police report
- (c) ☐ Probation report
- (d) ☐ Welfare investigator's declaration
- (e) ☐ Court documents regarding any alleged prior offenses
- (f) ☐ Other(specify):
- (g) ☐ (Specify facts):



PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

Defendant(s):

CASE NUMBER:

9. b. (2) **I am pleading guilty or no contest to take advantage of a plea agreement (my attorney will stipulate to a factual basis for the plea).** (*People v. West* (1970) 3 Cal.3d 595.)

INITIALS

**10. AFTER THE PLEA****a. Surrender**

I understand that the court is allowing me to surrender at a later date to begin serving time in custody.

I agree that if I fail to appear on the date set for surrender or sentencing without a legal excuse, my plea will become an "open plea" to the court, I will not be allowed to withdraw my plea, and I may be sentenced up to the maximum allowed by law.

**b. Sentencing Court**

I understand that I have the right to be sentenced by the same judge or commissioner who takes my plea.

I give up that right and agree that any judge or commissioner may sentence me.

**c. Sentencing Date**

I understand that I have the right to be sentenced within 20 court days. I give up that right and agree to be sentenced at a later date.

**11. MANDATORY WARNING**

I understand that if I am charged with violating Vehicle Code section 23103, as specified in Vehicle Code section 23103.5, or Vehicle Code sections 23152 or 23153, the following warning applies:

**You are hereby advised that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, impairs your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to human life to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both. If you continue to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, and as a result of that driving someone is killed, you can be charged with murder.**

**DEFENDANT'S STATEMENT**

I have read or have had read to me this form and have initialed each of the items that applies to my case. If I have an attorney, I have discussed each item with my attorney. By putting my initials next to the items in this form, I am indicating that I understand and agree with what is stated in each item that I have initialed. The nature of the charges, possible defenses, and effects of any prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation have been explained to me. I understand each of the rights outlined above, and I give up each of them to enter my plea.

Date:

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE OF DEFENDANT)

**ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT**

I am the attorney of record for the defendant. I have reviewed this form with my client. I have explained each of the items in the form, including the defendant's constitutional and statutory rights, to the defendant and have answered all of his or her questions with regard to those rights, the other items in this form, and the plea agreement. I have also discussed the facts of the case with the defendant and have explained the nature and elements of each charge; any possible defenses to the charges; the effect of any prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation; and the consequences of the plea.

I concur in the plea and admissions and join in the waiver of the defendant's constitutional and statutory rights, and I hereby stipulate that there is a factual basis for the plea and refer the court to the ☐ police report ☐ preliminary hearing transcript ☐ probation report ☐ other (specify): ☐ (*People v. West* (1970) 3 Cal.3d 595.)

Date:

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY)

PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA v.

Defendant(s):

CASE NUMBER:

**INTERPRETER'S STATEMENT**

I, having been duly sworn or having a written oath on file, certify that I truly translated this form to the defendant in the language noted below.

Language: ☐ Spanish ☐ Other (*specify*):

Date:

(CERTIFICATION NUMBER)

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE OF INTERPRETER)

**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT**

I have read this form and understand the terms of the plea agreement.

I ☐ agree ☐ do not agree with the terms of the plea agreement and the indicated sentence.

Date:

(TYPE OR PRINT NAME)

(SIGNATURE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY)

**COURT'S FINDINGS AND ORDER**

The court, having reviewed this form (and any addenda), and having orally examined the defendant, finds as follows:

1. The initialed items in this form have been read by or read to the defendant, and the defendant understands each of them.
2. The defendant understands the nature of the crimes, prior convictions, enhancements, allegations, and circumstances in aggravation listed in item 1 (on page 1) and the consequences of the plea and any admissions.
3. The defendant expressly, knowingly, understandingly, and intelligently waives the constitutional and statutory rights associated with this plea.
4. The defendant's plea, admissions, and waiver of rights are made freely and voluntarily.
5. A factual basis exists for the plea and admissions, or the defendant is pleading under a plea bargain under *People v. West*.

The court accepts the defendant's plea, admissions, and waiver of rights, and the defendant is hereby convicted based thereon.

It is ordered that this document be filed with the court's records of this case and that the defendant's plea, admissions, and waiver of rights be accepted and entered in the minutes of this court.

Date:

(SIGNATURE OF JUDICIAL OFFICER)

## SPR23-13

### Criminal Law: Circumstances in Aggravation

All comments are verbatim unless indicated by an asterisk (\*).

	Commenter	Position	Comment	Committee Response
1.	Orange County Bar Association by Michael A. Gregg President	A	*The above listed proposal appropriately addresses the stated purpose.	Thank you for reviewing and submitting a comment for this proposal.
2.	Superior Court of Orange County by Iyana Doherty, Courtroom Operations Supervisor	A	<p>Agree with the proposed changes to the Felony Tahl forms of right to trial on circumstances in aggravation justifying the imposition of upper term of a criminal offense or enhancement.</p> <p>Also agree with modifying “special allegations” to allegations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The proposal would require reprinting of local form L-341 with the new revisions – no cost savings.</li><li>• Implementation requirements – communication to staff, stakeholders, and Judicial Officers of addition of language in Felony Tahl forms.</li><li>• Three months for implementation is sufficient</li></ul>	Thank you for reviewing and submitting a comment for this proposal.