



Judicial Council of California

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Subject Details (With Text)

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File #: 18-213 **Version:** 1

Type: Legislative Proposal **Status:** Passed

File created: 10/9/2018 **In control:** Judicial Council

On agenda: 11/30/2018 **Final action:** 11/30/2018

Title: Judicial Council: 2019 Legislative Priorities (Action Required)

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. 20181130-18-213

| Date | Ver. | Action By | Action | Result |
|------------|------|------------------|----------|--------|
| 11/30/2018 | 1 | Judicial Council | approved | Pass |

Title
Judicial Council: 2019 Legislative Priorities (Action Required)

Summary

Each year, the Judicial Council authorizes sponsorship of legislation to further key council objectives and establishes priorities for the upcoming legislative year. In past years, the council’s legislative priorities have focused on implementing efficiencies in the courts, investing in the judicial branch, and securing critically needed judgeships. The Policy Coordination and Liaison Committee (PCLC) recommends to the Judicial Council a similar approach for the 2019 legislative year.

Recommendation

The Policy Coordination and Liaison Committee recommends that the Judicial Council approve the following legislative priorities in 2019:

1. Advocate for (a) continued investment in the judicial branch to include a method for stable and reliable funding for courts to address annual cost increases in baseline operations and plan for the future, and for (b) sufficient additional resources to improve physical access to the courts by keeping courts open, to expand access by increasing the ability of court users to conduct branch business online, and to restore programs and services that were reduced over the past few years;
2. Increase the number of judgeships and judicial officers in superior courts with the greatest need by:
 - Seeking funding for 10 of the 48 authorized but unfunded judgeships, to be allocated to the courts with the greatest need based on the most recently approved Judicial Needs Assessment;
 - Seeking funding for one additional justice in the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division 2 (Inyo, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties); and
 - Advocating for legislative ratification of the Judicial Council’s authority to convert 16 subordinate judicial officer (SJO) positions to judgeships in eligible courts, and sponsoring legislation for legislative ratification of the council’s authority to convert up to 10 additional SJO positions to judgeships, in eligible courts, if the conversion will result in an additional judge sitting in a family or juvenile law assignment that was previously presided over by an SJO;
3. Seek legislative authorization, if needed, for the disposition as authorized by the Judicial Council of unused courthouses in 2019 in a fair market value transaction, with the proceeds to be directed to the

Immediate and Critical Needs Account (ICNA) of the State Court Facilities Construction Fund established by Senate Bill 1407 (Perata; Stats, 2008, ch. 311) or any other Judicial Council facilities fund authorized by the Legislature;

4. Continue to sponsor or support legislation to improve judicial branch operational efficiencies, including cost savings and cost recovery measures;
5. Advocate for legislation to implement the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of California's Court System, as recommended by the Judicial Council and its advisory bodies;
6. Advocate for legislation to implement pretrial detention reform; and
7. Delegate to PCLC the authority to take positions or provide comments on behalf of the Judicial Council on proposed legislation (state and federal) and administrative rules or regulations, after evaluating input from council advisory bodies, council staff, and the courts, provided that the input is consistent with the council's established policies and precedents.