



NEWS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA • COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
Post Office Box 120128 • San Diego, CA 92112-0128

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Contact: Karen Dalton
Phone: (619) 450-5353

San Diego Superior Court To Stop Providing Court Reporters In Civil Proceedings

Following the lead of many other courts around the state, effective November 5, 2012, the San Diego Superior Court will provide court reporters only in criminal felony, family, and juvenile matters during regular court hours. Official court reporters will not normally be available in probate or other civil matters. In addition, effective December 28, 2012, official court reporters will only be available in family matters for Domestic Violence Restraining Order hearings, Contempt hearings, and Request for Order hearings of 40 minutes or less.

The court will continue to provide court reporters where legally required, including many criminal matters. This action will result in the elimination of approximately 30 court reporter positions. It is the first of more than 50 to 75 layoffs that are necessary in order for the court to meet a \$33 million budget reduction. This budget reduction is forcing the court to face the most significant cuts to services in its history.

“It is very unfortunate that we must eliminate court-provided court reporters in our civil and probate courtrooms,” said Presiding Judge Robert J. Trentacosta. “We have worked diligently over the past four years to meet budget reductions without compromising services to litigants and the public. However, the magnitude of the cuts this year and into the foreseeable

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future has forced us to begin eliminating services, such as court reporters in civil and probate cases, that will significantly affect access to our courts.”

Once civil court reporters’ positions are eliminated, parties will have to arrange for and pay privately-retained certified court reporters to serve as official reporters pro tempore, if they wish to have a record of the proceedings. These privately-retained court reporters must be appointed by the court in each matter.

The court will publish a list of court-approved certified shorthand reporters, including names and contact information, who can be privately scheduled and appointed as an official court reporter pro tempore without stipulation of the parties. Parties choosing a court reporter not on the court-approved list will have to get agreement of all parties in the proceeding to the appointment of such a court reporter. Information on new policies and procedures that parties must follow will be posted on the court’s website – www.sdcourt.ca.gov.

In addition, the court will post on its website its policies for court reporters to be approved for the list, and for arranging for the appointment of a reporter.

The elimination of court reporters in civil cases to address budget cuts is a growing trend in the state. The Superior Courts that have taken this step, in whole or in part, in a number of counties include Alameda, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Ventura. State law prohibits the court from using recording equipment as an alternative in most civil cases.

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