



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

Seeking Justice for All

CAOC to seek future increases in courts budget

Association to keep focus on restoring recent cuts

SACRAMENTO (June 16, 2014) – The additional funding for California courts in the recently-approved state budget will help, but the fight to restore adequate funding for the state’s judiciary is far from over, CAOC’s top executive said today.

“It’s unfortunate the courts weren’t able to receive the equivalent of what was spent last year,” said Nancy Drabble, Consumer Attorneys of California Chief Lobbyist and CEO. “But we’ll continue the fight next year and keep working until the courts are back to where they should be financially.”

The final budget passed by the Legislature on Sunday night included \$129 million in new revenue from the state’s General Fund. While that is certainly a step in the right direction, it is not enough to replace the \$266 million California’s trial courts needed to “tread water” at last year’s spending levels.

Last year, the courts had to spend down roughly \$250 million in reserves to augment funding for operational expenses. Those reserves have been exhausted, meaning the courts needed far more from the General Fund to keep at last year’s levels for the 2014-15 fiscal year.

As a result, some courts in many California counties are likely to face further cuts affecting access to justice for individuals and businesses.

All told, California’s courts have seen more than \$1.1 billion in budget cuts since the start of the Great Recession in 2008. The results have included reduced staffing, longer lines at courthouses and shorter hours of service for the public, with 51 courthouses and 205 courtrooms closed completely.

Because of constitutional protections for criminal cases, the people who feel the impact of court budget cuts the most are those involved in civil cases, such as domestic violence protection, family law and foster care issues.

“At some point we need to stop just trying to tread water and bring the court budgets back closer to where they should be,” Drabble said. “Our members and I will redouble our efforts over the next year to impress upon lawmakers and Gov. Brown just how seriously the lives of Californians are affected by the inadequate funding of our courts.”

Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization of plaintiffs’ attorneys representing consumers seeking accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.

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