



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

*Seeking Justice for All*

## Courts face fiscal cliff if state strips extra \$200 million State finance proposal would mean even deeper cuts for 2013-14

**SACRAMENTO (Dec. 5, 2012)** – Consumer Attorneys of California President Brian Kabateck said today that California courts face their own “fiscal cliff” under a new proposal that would slash more than \$200 million in additional funding in the coming fiscal year.

Kabateck said the plan, revealed by state budget writers during recent discussions with state court officials, hurts a court system that has already been gravely injured by more than \$1.1 billion in cuts over the past five years. The budget slashing of recent years has shrunk the state courts budget by more than a third during that stretch.

“With all the funding cuts, our just system has been teetering at the edge of a very deep ravine,” Kabateck said. “With apologies to Congress, we here in California are facing our own fiscal cliff when it comes to the future of our courts.”

Kabateck and others learned of the troubles in a message delivered today from Judge Steven Jahr, the state’s Administrative Director of the Courts. Jahr said he was told by state Finance Department officials that \$200 million in court reserves that court officials anticipated would be used to ease cuts in 2013-14 instead would have to be spent down during the current fiscal year.

As a result, California already battered court system faces heading into the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2013 with substantially less operating revenue than court administrators had been counting on. Jahr said [in a message to court administrators](#) and others that this latest development represented “a potential crisis that would further cripple our justice system.”

Kabateck and other CAOC leaders joined Jahr in urging concerned citizens to contact state lawmakers and urge them to support a push to see the \$200 million restored to the 2013-14 budget, as was spelled out in the state’s current budget bill. In addition, California State Supreme Court Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye is scheduled to meet with Gov. Jerry Brown on Dec. 12 to discuss the matter.

“Our justice system has been squeezed more than enough already,” Kabateck said. “The court system serves the neediest Californians every day. Look at what we’re seeing in Los Angeles, where they’re talking about closing down 10 court houses. Our courts are a pillar of our democracy. But it’s a pillar that’s teetering. We don’t want it to topple.”

*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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