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**CONTACT:**

Karen Korr  
Director of Outreach  
Strategy & CCO  
619-321-4116  
619-944-0650 (cell)  
[kkorr@sdcba.org](mailto:kkorr@sdcba.org)

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY BAR REPORTS ON ISSUES IMPACTING JUSTICE IN SAN DIEGO**

*Annual Update on Effects of Court Budget Cutbacks and Other Access to Justice Issues*

**SAN DIEGO** (December 14, 2017) – The San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA) has released a report on issues impacting justice in San Diego County. The update, in part, is the next iteration of the Association’s annual report on the State of the Judiciary in San Diego County, but has also been expanded to provide a more thorough overview of other current issues impacting access to justice.

While California’s judicial branch has faced increasingly substantial budget cuts since 2007, the cutbacks are now beginning to have a more significant effect on the day-to-day lives on San Diego citizens. For the San Diego Superior Court, 10 courtrooms are expected to close in addition to one civil department. Court reporters will be eliminated in all family law cases, and juvenile dependency operations will be consolidated, among other service cutbacks. This fiscal year the state budget does not allocate any additional funding for court operations, but the budget shortfall can also be attributed to increased labor costs and the Workload Allocation Funding Methodology (WAFM) used state-wide to determine how courts are funded.

“Our court leadership has done an incredible job of managing efficiencies to minimize the impact of the budget cuts, but there is only so much that can be done to combat a \$30 million deficit,” said Loren Freestone, 2017 SDCBA President. “Process delays, fewer courtrooms, and the elimination of court reporters affects the safeguards that ensure proper and efficient administration of justice.”

The report also covers justice-related issues where the SDCBA was vocal in 2017, including the U.S. President’s January 2017 Executive Orders related to immigration, funding for Legal Services Corporation, the proposed division of the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals, and the President’s proposed ban on transgender military service members. Through its mission, the SDCBA has addressed and will continue to address any issue that has a potential impact on the administration of justice (including respect for the rule of law and the judicial branch), diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, professionalism and ethics, civility, equal justice under the law/civil liberties, independence of the judiciary including criticism of judges, constitutional rights that impact the justice system, and access to justice.

To read the SDCBA’s report, Issues Impacting Justice in San Diego, visit [www.sdcba.org/justicereport](http://www.sdcba.org/justicereport). Additional information on the SDCBA’s advocacy efforts can be found at [www.sdcba.org/advocacy](http://www.sdcba.org/advocacy).

*The San Diego County Bar Association (SDCBA) is the region’s largest law related organization and the hub of the city’s legal community, headquartered in downtown San Diego. As the representative of the legal profession, the SDCBA aims to serve the county’s lawyers and legal professionals, and the greater San Diego community. For more information, please visit [www.sdcba.org](http://www.sdcba.org).*

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