

March 25, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

Assembly Bill 1208, the “Trial Court Bill of Rights” is a bill that should be of great concern to every judicial officer in the State of California. This proposed legislation would transform the judiciary from a cohesive and co-equal branch of government into 58 fragments. This diminution of judicial unity and power will be accomplished not through the acquiescence or consent of the judicial branch, but through legislation.

If you believe, as we do, that the collective voices of the judiciary should determine the future of the judicial branch, we urge you to type this link in to your browser and read the bill:

http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/11-12/bill/asm/ab_1201-1250/ab_1208_bill_20110218_introduced.pdf

We are also concerned about the fundamental fairness of the timing of this legislation. Our new chief was sworn into office on January 3, 2011. AB 1208 was introduced in the Legislature on February 20th. In our view, legislative reorganization of judicial branch governance without meaningful judicial input is wrong. Our new Chief should be afforded a fair opportunity to address the important issues of branch governance and build a consensus among judges after the issues have been fully and candidly discussed.

Decisions about judicial branch governance should be made by judges, after discussions within the branch. If you want the third branch of government to remain strong and independent, we urge you to voice your opposition to AB 1208.

Kevin Enright, Presiding Judge San Diego County
Mary Ann O’Malley, Past Chair of the Trial Court Presiding Judges Advisory Committee
Robin Appel, Presiding Judge San Joaquin County
David Warner, Assistant Presiding Judge San Joaquin County
Brian Hill, Presiding Judge Santa Barbara County
Art Garcia, Assistant Presiding Judge Santa Barbara County
Jim Herman, Judge Santa Barbara County
Steve Crandall, Presiding Judge San Luis Obispo County
Barry La Barbera, Assistant Presiding Judge San Luis Obispo County
Richard Loftus, Presiding Judge Santa Clara County
Brian Walsh, Assistant Presiding Judge Santa Clara County
Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge Sonoma County
Ron Chouteau, Assistant Presiding Judge Sonoma County
Vince O’Neill, Presiding Judge Ventura County
Brian Back, Assistant Presiding Judge Ventura County
Don Byrd, Presiding Judge Glenn County

Peter Twede, Assistant Presiding Judge Glenn County
Cindee Mayfield, Presiding Judge Mendocino County
Richard Henderson, Assistant Presiding Judge Mendocino County
David DeVore, Presiding Judge Alpine County
Thomas Kolpacoff, Assistant Presiding Judge Alpine County
Chris Yeager, Presiding Judge Imperial County
William Lehman, Assistant Presiding Judge Imperial County
Diana Becton, Presiding Judge Contra Costa County
Barry Goode, Assistant Presiding Judge Contra Costa County
Douglas Elwell, Presiding Judge San Bernardino County
Chris Chandler, Presiding Judge Sutter County
Donald Sokol, Presiding Judge Lassen County
John Kennelly, Presiding Judge Sierra County
Steven J. Howell, Presiding Judge Butte County
Stephen Kroyer, Presiding Judge Napa County
Janet Hilde, Presiding Judge Plumas County
Laura Masunaga, Presiding Judge Siskiyou County
Molly Bigelow, Presiding Judge Shasta County
Tom Anderson, Presiding Judge Nevada County
Scott Daniels, Presiding Judge Solano County
Richard Scheuler, Presiding Judge Tehema County
Jim Wagoner, Assistant Presiding Judge El Dorado County
Kathleen O'Leary, Justice 4th District Court of Appeal
Douglas P. Miller, Justice 4th District Court of Appeal, former Presiding Judge Riverside
Jeffrey King, Justice 4th District Court of Appeal
Ron Robie, Justice 3rd District Court of Appeal
Elena Duarte, Justice 3rd District Court of Appeal
William J. Murray Jr., Justice 3rd District Court of Appeal
Laurie Zelon, Justice 2nd District Court of Appeal
James Lambden, Justice 1st District Court of Appeal
Maria Rivera, Justice 1st District Court of Appeal
Mark Simons, Justice 1st District Court of Appeal
Terry Bruiniers, Justice 1st District Court of Appeal
Tom Maddock, former Presiding Judge Contra Costa County
Sharon Waters, former Presiding Judge Riverside County
Ronald Taylor, retired former Presiding Judge Riverside County
Ira Kaufman, former Presiding Judge of Plumas County
Adrienne Grover, former Presiding Judge Monterey County
Steve Baker, former Presiding Judge Shasta County
Scott Kays, former Presiding Judge Solano County
Mike Welch, former Presiding Judge San Bernardino County
Winifred Smith, Judge Alameda County
Steve Brick, Judge Alameda County
Manuel Covarrubias, Judge Ventura County
Ana Espana, Judge San Diego County
Lon Hurwitz, Judge Orange County

Erica Yew, Judge Santa Clara County
Margaret Johnson, Judge Santa Clara County
John Pacheco, Judge San Bernardino County
Clare Maier, Judge Contra Costa County
Steve Austin, Judge Contra Costa County
John Kennedy, Judge Contra Costa County
John Molloy, Judge Riverside County
Craig Riemer, Judge Riverside County
Becky Dugan, Judge Riverside County
Elizabeth Sichel, Judge Riverside County
Dale Wells, Judge Riverside County
Sarah Christian, Judge Riverside County
James Cox, Judge Riverside County
Dallas Holmes, retired Judge Riverside County
Larry Fry, Retired Judge Riverside County
Richard Couzens, retired Judge Placer County
Terry Friedman, retired Judge Los Angeles County
Socrates Peter Manoukian, Judge Santa Clara County
Jerome Brock, Judge Santa Clara County
Franklin Bondonno, Judge Santa Clara County
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Thomas Cain, Judge Santa Clara County
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