

# NEWS RELEASE

## SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

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## **\$5.3 MILLION BUDGET DEFICIT FORCES THE SAN FRANCISCO SUPERIOR COURT TO FURLOUGH STAFF, REDUCE CLERK OFFICE HOURS**

### **Courtrooms, Courthouses Will Remain Open on Limited Service Days**

**SAN FRANCISCO** -- The San Francisco Superior Court is furloughing staff on Fridays beginning August 4, 2017 and reducing clerk office hours effective September 1 to help close a \$5.3 million deficit for the current fiscal year, Presiding Judge Teri L. Jackson announced today.

"We are committed to keeping our courtrooms open and continuing to prioritize access to justice despite the 9 percent cut in our state funding allocation for the fiscal year that began two days ago," Judge Jackson said. "We want to thank our labor organizations and staff for their cooperation and approval of 11 mandatory furlough days between August 4, 2017 and June 29, 2018. This contribution is a solution that will help us to avoid staff layoffs."

Every Friday, beginning September 1, 2017, all clerks' offices will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drop boxes will be available outside each main entrance of all clerks' offices between 1 p.m. and close of business at 4 p.m.

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## **SFSC/LIMITED SERVICE DAYS 2-2-2-2**

Documents received in the drop box by close of business will be processed with a same-day filing date.

Staff will be furloughed without pay one Friday per month, on a rotation schedule that will result in reduced staff every Friday (except Court holidays). The Criminal, Traffic, Civil, Unified Family Court and Juvenile Delinquency clerks' offices will all close at 1 p.m. on Fridays to allow staff to catch up on filing documents and other necessary tasks. Courthouses and courtrooms will remain open on these Limited Service Days, although calendars will be adjusted to accommodate reduced staffing in courtrooms.

The Court's budget deficit reflects an escalating trend among trial courts, despite the persistent efforts of California Supreme Court Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye and the Judicial Council. Just last week, the Chief Justice emphasized that chronic underfunding of the courts "unfairly affects members of the public seeking their day in court."

Judge Jackson praised the Chief Justice for "her tireless efforts to secure a stable funding source for all California trial courts."

Judge Jackson also thanked the San Francisco bench for embracing her request to participate in a Voluntary Judicial Contribution Program and Furlough Plan. To show solidarity with labor and to help with the Court's operations' budget, Judge Jackson urged Judges to consider a voluntary donation to the Court equaling one day's pay per month, or about \$509, effective August 1 through June 2018.

"Judges want to be part of the solution alongside our dedicated and highly trained employees who serve the public and are essential to our commitment to access to justice," Judge Jackson said.

The \$5.3 million deficit is the result of the Workload-Based Allocation and Funding Methodology, a Judicial Branch formula adopted in 2013 in an effort to achieve a more transparent and equitable distribution of trial court funding. For

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## **SFSC/LIMITED SERVICE DAYS**

### **3-3-3-3**

Fiscal Year 2017-18, which started two days ago, the WAFM formula resulted in a 9 percent cut for the Court, or \$5.271 million – the largest reduction among all of California’s 58 trial courts. The cut reduced the Court’s funding allocation from \$56.9 million to \$51.7 million.

Before the Great Recession and state budget cuts that required staff layoffs in 2011, the Court’s budget was \$90.5 million in 2008. At the time, the Court employed nearly 600 non-judicial staff, compared to about 430 now.

The mandatory staff furloughs, which were agreed to by the Court’s four labor organizations, will generate \$1.5 million in savings. The Court also has identified other balancing solutions to close the deficit, including a hiring freeze.

The Court has provided public notice of the Limited Service Days in 2017-18 pursuant to Government Code Section 68106. The public comment period for these Limited Service Days is now open and will be available until August 31, 2017. Comments may be directed to [sfcourtbudget@sftc.org](mailto:sfcourtbudget@sftc.org).

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