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April 3, 2023

The Honorable Richard Roth  
California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Room 7510  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 75 (Roth) – Courts: judgeships.  
As amended March 20, 2023 – SUPPORT  
Set to be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee – April 10, 2023**

Dear Senator Roth,

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC), representing all 58 of the state’s counties, writes in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 75, which upon appropriation, seeks to authorize 26 new superior court judgeships to county superior courts based on the Judicial Council’s existing needs assessment, which examines court filings data, workload standards, and consideration for courts that have the greatest need relative to their current complement of judicial officers.

Many California counties face a critical shortage of Superior Court judges. While the judicial branch has received funding for 50 judgeships over recent years following the passage of Assembly Bill 159 (2007), the need for additional judicial resources persists. According to the Judicial Council’s 2022 update of the Judicial Needs Assessment, 17 superior courts across the state currently require a total of 98 new judges. This shortage has a ripple effect within counties. It not only places extreme administrative burden on the entire criminal justice system – impacting judges, district attorneys, public defenders, and judicial staff who struggle to ensure that legal proceedings are held in a timely and effective manner – it also creates considerable hardship and harm to county residents who experience court delays and case dismissals. This is on top of the barriers that existed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, which have posed significant challenges to court operations. Lastly, it is important to note that the current disparities between authorized and funded judgeships are most noticeable in counties with a growing population. For example, the 2022 Judicial Needs Assessment found that of the 98 judgeships, 22 are needed in Riverside County and 30 are needed in San Bernardino County. This means we could possibly see increasing disparities in counties such as Riverside, San Bernardino and others across the state should population trends continue.

Whereas CSAC is acutely aware of the projected state budget deficit and appreciates sound fiscal decision-making, it is critical that the state funds additional judgeships to meet the caseload demand in every county. The shortage of judges has detrimental and lasting impacts on the ability of counties to ensure that our judicial system serves all residents of California.

It is for these reasons CSAC supports SB 75. Thank you for your leadership on this very important issue. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding our position, please do not hesitate to contact me at [rmorimune@counties.org](mailto:rmorimune@counties.org).

Sincerely,

Ryan Morimune  
Legislative Advocate