

Date

Dear <<Senator _____>>
<<Assemblyman/woman _____>>

I am a resident of Riverside County. The court system in this county does not have enough judges. A recent state study concluded that in order to handle the caseload, the court needs 146 judges; they have only 76 (including three vacant positions awaiting appointment). That equates to 3.5 judges per 100,000 people – the statewide average is 5.2. The number of judges has not kept pace with our population increase over the past two decades. In fact, our population in Riverside County has almost doubled since 1990, yet we have only received a 31% increase in the number of judges.

The situation is critical. Without enough resources, cases will be delayed or remain unresolved. These cases involve real people - children, families, victims and the elderly.

I am asking you to:

1. Encourage the Governor to fill the three judge vacancies in the Riverside Superior Court. These positions are already funded, so it is cost-neutral to the state's budget;
2. Provide additional judges to handle the workload in this county by funding Assembly Bill 159 (2007) and supporting future legislation for more judges;
3. Restore reductions to the trial courts so that the burden of these cuts are not disproportionately borne by the justice system; and
4. Understand that courts are part of public safety and an essential branch of our government – they must remain open and fully functioning.

Please do not allow the state budget crisis to erode the third branch of government and to marginalize its importance in our society. Without an effective court system, an orderly society can easily be dismantled.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,