

CALIFORNIA  
LAWYERS  
ASSOCIATION

June 16, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Committee on Budget  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
President Pro Tempore  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable María Elena Durazo  
Chair, Budget Subcommittee No. 5  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 2032  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Committee on Budget and Fiscal  
Review  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 2082  
Sacramento, CA 95814

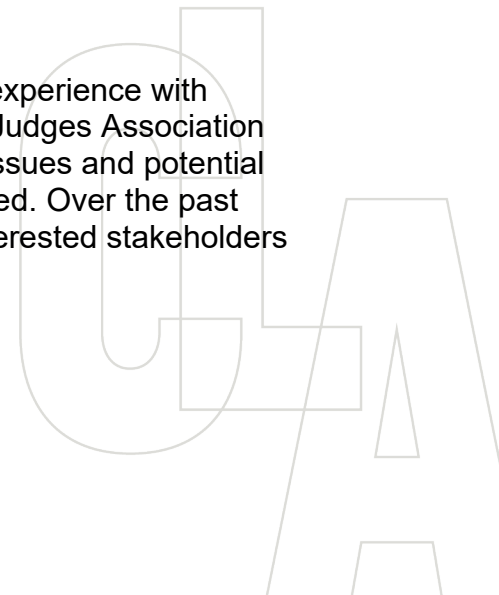
The Honorable Cristina Garcia  
Chair, Budget Subcommittee No. 5  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 2013  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Remote Civil Proceedings

Dear Leaders of the California State Legislature:

We are writing on behalf of the California Lawyers Association (CLA) in support of legislation that would ensure that remote civil proceedings can continue beyond the pandemic. If the Legislature does not act, when the Governor lifts the State of Emergency regarding the pandemic, the temporary authorization for remote proceedings in the courts will quickly expire. We therefore support the intent of the budget proposal and statutory authorization for continued availability of remote civil proceedings.

We have received ongoing reports from our members about their experience with remote proceedings during the pandemic. CLA and the California Judges Association created a Joint Taskforce on Remote Proceedings to explore the issues and potential long-term solutions, even before any legislation had been introduced. Over the past several months, we have also had discussions with a variety of interested stakeholders



concerning these issues. We recognize that different approaches have been proposed, and that some of the statutory details will have a significant impact, but we are committed to engaging in ongoing discussions aimed at fair, just, and workable solutions.

We have seen the tremendous benefit of remote proceedings, including decreased costs to the litigants and increased access to justice. Among other things, remote access opens up opportunities for working parents and caregivers to participate in proceedings and avoids travel costs and significant time commitments that are associated with in-person court appearances. At the same time, we recognize that any solution needs to be carefully crafted so parties and the court retain the ability to pursue in-person proceedings, including witness testimony, and rights are protected.

Although remote proceedings may not be appropriate in all situations, we believe they are a critical *option* that should be retained. Completely removing the ability to conduct remote proceedings will not serve to advance the administration of justice.

For all of these reasons, we support the intent of the budget proposal and strongly encourage ongoing discussions with the interested stakeholders.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Ona Alston Dosunmu  
C.E.O. & Executive Director



Emilio Varanini  
President

cc: Christopher Francis, Principal Consultant, Senate Budget Sub 5  
Jennifer Kim, Consultant, Assembly Budget Sub 5  
Jessica Devencenzi, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Newsom  
Eric Dang, Office of the Senate President pro Tempore Atkins  
Alf Brandt, General Counsel, Assembly Speaker Rendon  
Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Alison Merrilees, Chief Counsel, Assembly Judiciary Committee