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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING BETWEEN REGION 2 COURTS AND COURT INTERPRETER EMPLOYEES

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BACKGROUND

In the past, court interpreters have served the trial courts as independent contractors, receiving a daily pay rate of $265. As with other independent contractors, the interpreters have been responsible for providing their own health and retirement benefits.

The Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act of 2002 ("the Act"), provides the vehicle to transition court interpreters from independent contractor status to employee status with full benefits.

The 58 trial courts in California have been divided into 4 regions for purposes of collective bargaining. The following fifteen (15) courts -- **Alameda, Contra Costa, Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Sonoma** make up Region 2. The recognized employee organization representing the Region 2 court interpreters is the California Federation of Interpreters/The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America ("Union").

CURRENT STATUS

The Region 2 Trial Court Negotiating Team and the Union have been meeting since October 2004, with the goal of ratifying the first contract with our employee interpreters on or before July 1, 2005. The courts have bargained in good faith with the Union, with the understanding that increased State funding will be provided to cover the transition costs beginning July 1, 2005. The State's trial court interpreter budget is $67 million. A proposal is being considered to add $15 million to the state trial court interpreter budget (a 23% increase), which will fully fund health benefits and retirement system costs for all court employee interpreters. The increased funding is contingent upon the State's

passage of the proposed state trial court budget. Given the State's limited resources, no additional funds have been budgeted for interpreter salary increases in FY 2005-2006.

The current daily pay rate for court interpreters is $265.00, which translates to a yearly full-time wage of approximately $68,900. With the addition of the benefits package the average interpreter would receive nearly $93,000 in total compensation. The benefits package includes:

- Health benefits
- Retirement benefits
- Vacation
- Sick leave
- Paid court holidays

The Negotiating Team remains committed to bargaining in good faith, balancing the needs of our court interpreter employees while remaining fiscally responsible.