



Superior Court of California

COUNTY OF VENTURA
Hall of Justice
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, CA 93009

Michael D. Planet
*Executive Officer/Clerk
and Jury Commissioner*

November 9, 2020

Aram Agdaian
Chief Negotiator
Service Employees International Union, CTW, CLC Local 721
2472 Eastman Avenue #30
Ventura, CA 93003

RE: Court Counter Proposal Number 3

Dear Mr. Agdaian,

The Ventura Superior Court thanks you and your negotiation team for the opportunity to meet and discuss measures to achieve cost savings for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. As discussed in our November 5, 2020 meeting, the COVID-19 pandemic is stretching all levels of government beyond available resources, especially at the state and local level. The lack of relief from the federal government has compounded the problem.

The Court started the fiscal year with a budget deficit of \$5.7 million, which was the result of the Court's share of the \$200 million statewide reduction and increased costs related to the pandemic. The first quarter budget projected a \$1.7 million deficit in the Court's budget. The majority of the projected deficit is based on the Court not receiving approximately \$1.0 million in anticipated revenue from the Judicial Council. With the further erosion of its budget, the Court is required to take additional savings measures. We have implemented several cost saving measures to balance the budget, including but not limited to, eliminating or freezing vacant positions, reducing costs of services and non-pandemic related supplies and utilizing court vehicles to reduce mileage expenses.

In light of our budgetary situation, the Court has asked all employees to increase their number of mandatory furlough days. This is consistent with actions taking place in many California courts and with Judicial Council employees. On November 6, 2020, non-represented court staff increased their mandatory furlough days from 18 days to 24 days. The Court is now asking SEIU represented employees to share the effort to reduce the budget deficit by ratifying the Court's attached proposal for additional mandatory furlough days and to continue the suspension of the Court's 401(k) match to offset the June 27, 2021 increase to the Flex Benefit Allowance.

Increasing the number of mandatory furlough days for SEIU represented staff from 14 days to 18 days will result in a savings of approximately \$295,000. Unfortunately, this is exactly half of the budget reduction target necessary from the bargaining unit, so the remaining \$285,000 will need to come from reductions to the number of SEIU staff. The Court expects to begin these discussions with SEIU in November 2020, in anticipation of layoffs in early 2021.

The past nine months have been extremely challenging keeping the Court operational and the challenge continues to grow due to the complications of the budget. The Court recognizes that this is not easy for our staff and that mandatory furloughs and reductions in staff are a significant sacrifice to all. We appreciate SEIU and our employees support and understanding as we continue to work through these issues together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Sherman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert Sherman
Assistant Court Executive Officer

cc: Michael Planet, Court Executive Officer
Pat Patterson, Deputy Executive Officer
Stacey Cue, Lead Negotiator IEDA