

**REPORT OF THE  
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

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DATE: May 10, 2013

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections and Intergovernmental Relations  
Committee

FROM: Gerry F. Miller   
Chief Legislative Analyst  
Council File: 13-0002-S66  
Assignment No.: 13-04-0357

SUBJECT: Resolution (Koretz-Krekorian-Buscaino) to support any legislation and/or administrative action which would urge the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court to stop the reduction and consolidation process at all courthouses in the City of Los Angeles.

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached Resolution to include in the City's 2013-2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT of any legislation and/or administrative action which would urge the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court to stop the reduction and consolidation process at all courthouses in the City of Los Angeles so that any court reduction plan and any sound alternatives can be properly discussed and vetted in a public forum with hearings and with ample notice at each impacted courthouse in the City of Los Angeles before June 1, 2013, including consultation with the City Council and all public stakeholders, in order to achieve a more sensible approach for streamlining court operations that would minimize the negative impacts on our communities.

SUMMARY

Resolution (Koretz-Krekorian-Buscaino), introduced April 23, 2013, proposes that the City of Los Angeles support any legislation and/or administrative action which would urge the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court to stop the reduction and consolidation process at all courthouses in the City of Los Angeles. Beginning in 2008, court systems across the State of California began experiencing massive cuts in general funding which resulted in court closures, reduced hours of operation, increased court fees, and significant job losses across the State and within the City and County of Los Angeles. The Executive Committee plans to further reduce and consolidate courthouses will only exacerbate the decline in court services and should not be fully implemented until public hearings have been held and the appropriate elected officials and stakeholders have been consulted.

BACKGROUND

In November of 2012, the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court announced a court reduction plan to close a projected shortfall of between \$50 million and \$80 million. Included in these plans is the closure of eight Los Angeles County courts by June 30, including the West Los Angeles Courthouse, San Pedro Courthouse and the David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center in South Los Angeles. The reduction and consolidation of courthouses in Los Angeles County is projected to result in significant job loss - it is estimated that approximately 500 court jobs will be lost - and overcrowding in the remaining courts within the

City of Los Angeles due to the reassignment of existing court cases. The Executive Committee has already begun its implementation of its reduction and consolidation plan, without having held any public hearings in the City of Los Angeles or other affected cities. The court administration has also failed to consult affected stakeholders or elected officials regarding the appropriateness and efficacy of their plan.

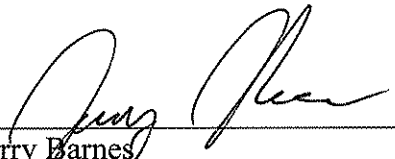
Since 2008, the court system across the State of California has experienced a 65 percent decrease in general funding that has resulted court closures, reduced hours of operation, increased court fees, significant job loss. The Executive Committee plans to further reduce and consolidate courthouses will only exacerbate the decline in court services, and have incited thousands of courthouse workers and other members of affected communities to organize against and formally petition the reduction plans. The courthouse workers and community members argue that the reduction and consolidation efforts will result in long delays in case hearings and trial dates, reduced court hours, longer lines, and an overall reduction in the quantity and quality of court services. There is also concern that court closures will force residents to travel longer distances at greater personal costs.

DEPARTMENTS NOTIFIED

None

BILL STATUS

None

  
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Jerry Barnes  
Analyst

GFM:jb

Attachment: Resolution (Koretz-Krekorian-Buscaino)

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13-0002-S66

RESOLUTION RULES, ELECTIONS & INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state or federal governmental body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, in November of 2012, the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court announced a court reduction plan to close a projected shortfall of between \$50 million and \$80 million, which has put eight LA County courts on course for closure by June 30, including West Los Angeles Courthouse, San Pedro Courthouse and the David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center in South LA; and

WHEREAS, not only will the planned closures result in the elimination of 500 court jobs, but it will also facilitate the reassignment of the existing cases to other courts in the City of Los Angeles, which will inevitably create much heavier court traffic at other LA court locations; and

WHEREAS, the Executive Committee has already begun implementation of said plan, without holding public hearings in Los Angeles or any impacted city, and the court administration has not consulted with effected stakeholders or elected officials about their plan; and

WHEREAS, such action is highly problematic given that, since 2008, California's court system has lost 65 percent of its general funding resulting in court closures, reduced hours, increased court fees, and has ultimately impacted equal access to justice for Californians as 67 courtrooms have already been closed and 500 additional court jobs have been lost; and

WHEREAS, concerned community members and courthouse workers have collected thousands of petitions opposing the recent reduction plan as Los Angeles residents raise concerns about longer lines outside the courthouses that remain open, delays in case hearing and trial dates, and force residents to travel longer distances at greater personal cost;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, with the concurrence of the Mayor, that by the adoption of this Resolution, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2013-2014 State Legislative Program SUPPORT for legislation and/or administrative action which would urge the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles County Superior Court to stop the reduction and consolidation process at all courthouses in the City of Los Angeles so that any court reduction plan and any sound alternatives can be properly discussed and vetted in a public forum with hearings and with ample notice at each impacted courthouse in the City of Los Angeles before June 1, 2013, including consultation with the City Council and all public stakeholders, in order to achieve a more sensible approach for streamlining court operations that would minimize the negative impact on our communities.

PRESENTED BY: Paul Koretz  
PAUL KORETZ  
Councilmember, 5<sup>th</sup> District

Joe Buscaino  
JOE BUSCAINO  
Councilmember, 15<sup>th</sup> District

SECONDED BY: Paul Koretz

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cc EPR