

EXHIBIT 3

SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
PRESIDING JUDGE



DAVID SLAYTON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
CLERK OF COURT

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
Senate Judiciary Committee Chair
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Umberg and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

All stakeholders agree: the current shocking shortfall in the number of Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs) in the California trial courts is a constitutional crisis, with tens of thousands of your constituents each month now deprived of the possibility of meaningful access to justice for the lack of a verbatim record of proceedings.

In 2018, the California Supreme Court found that the lack of a verbatim record will “frequently be fatal” to a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.¹ This falls heaviest on our communities’ most vulnerable litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil cases, where the Government Code now prohibits the Court from using electronic recording to capture a verbatim record. Many of these litigants are self-represented and unable to afford the exorbitant cost of hiring a private CSR, which can cost up to \$3,300 a day.² This places a verbatim record out of the reach of those without significant means, resulting in unequal access to justice for the vast majority of litigants in our Court.

It is not hyperbole to say: no record, no justice.

We, on behalf of the Los Angeles Superior Court, implore the Legislature to fix this problem **now** via the means set out in Senator Susan Rubio’s proposed bill, SB-662 - Courts: court reporters. We reject that the problem represents a mere temporary market imbalance remediable by higher wages and modified working conditions. It is our experience, and that of virtually every other California Superior Court, that a sufficient number of qualified CSRs are neither available now nor will be into the future. The proposition that the “supply of reporters [is] currently adequate” is wrong.³ We would be very pleased if there were such a supply and would gladly welcome them to fill our over 100 CSR vacancies. But there is not, and we all need

¹ *Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, 608, fn. 1.

² Data provided by a survey of 49 private consumer attorneys. It is unknown how much of the court reporter rate charged by companies is provided to the reporter in the form of compensation and how much is kept by the company.

³ Senate Bill 662 OPPOSE Letter to Senator Susan Rubio from SEIU California, Orange County Employees Association, Deposition Reporters Association, International Union of Operating Engineers, AFCSME, California, CA Court Reporters Association and CA Labor Federation, dated April 3, 2023.

to look that fact squarely in the face. The question is: what are we, collectively, going to do about it?

The answer cannot be further “wait and see.”

This issue is impacting your constituents *now* up and down California. A parent needing appellate review *now* of a family law judge’s decision to allow her three-year-old to move from California to New York (and thus practically eliminating “frequent and continuing contact”) cannot wait and see.⁴ A parent needing appellate review *now* of a family law judge’s decision not to permit him to have custody of his eight-year-old daughter because her mother’s living space is larger cannot wait and see. A spouse needing appellate review *now* of a family law judge’s decision not to modify a large spousal support order which she cannot pay as a result of an injury and lay off from work cannot wait and see.

A verbatim transcript of proceedings provides more than potential appellate review. Very often self-represented litigants find themselves baffled or overwhelmed by their court proceedings and eventually obtain counsel, pro bono or otherwise, to aid them. A verbatim record enables the litigant to review what occurred during the proceeding and enables them to show it to a lawyer.

Just as litigants in limited civil and misdemeanor proceedings now have the benefit of a verbatim transcript via electronic recording, so, too, should the litigants in the real-life examples above.⁵ In fact, electronic recording for permitted case types is currently installed in over 200 of our courtrooms and provides litigants access to an accurate verbatim transcript of their proceedings. That electronic recording transcripts are not (yet) the equal to one created by a CSR—a proposition that would benefit from more fact-finding in our view—is a classic example of making the perfect the enemy of the good. The alternative is the current situation, where there is no verbatim record at all. It cannot be correct that the answer is simply to deny litigants *any* verbatim transcript while we engage in a further wait and see process.

The shortage of CSRs impacts all 58 counties in California. In Los Angeles County alone, in January and February of 2023, more than 52,000 court proceedings took place without a CSR or electronic recording to capture what occurred during the proceedings. At the current rate, our court projects more than 300,000 cases will be heard in 2023 without any official transcript.

SB-662, filed by Senator Susan Rubio and sponsored by the Family Violence Appellate Project, would:

- authorize the Court Reporter’s Board of California (the Board) to issue a provisional certificate, that would be valid for three years, to an individual who has passed the Registered Professional Reporter examination administered by the National Court

⁴ Family Code Section 3020

⁵ Government Code Section 69957 currently permits electronic recording in limited civil, infraction, and misdemeanor cases.

Reporters Association or who is eligible to take the examination to become a certified shorthand reporter approved by the Board;

- authorize the Court to electronically record all civil proceedings if approved electronic recording equipment is available;
- require the Court to provide a CSR the right of first refusal to transcribe an electronically reported proceeding; and
- require the Court to make every effort to hire a CSR before electing to electronically record actions or proceedings.

The Court greatly values our CSRs and recognizes their intrinsic role in the justice system. That is why we are grateful for the Court's share of the \$30 million provided by the Legislature this fiscal year to bolster our efforts to recruit and retain CSRs. The Court has undertaken a vigorous and high-profile effort, announcing in February of this year robust signing and retention bonuses, competitive student loan forgiveness and a generous finder's fee.⁶ We are hopeful these efforts will yield an expanded CSR workforce to fill the existing 100-plus CSR vacancies.

Despite our ambitious recruitment and retention efforts, the Court's CSR vacancy rate has only grown over the last year. In fact, in the over two months since we announced significant recruitment and retention bonuses, the Court's CSR workforce has continued to decline. This chronic and increasing vacancy rate is the result of several factors:

- CSRs can make much more money in the private sector: While the median court-employed CSR salary plus benefits **exceeds \$183,940** (51% more than other non-manager court positions), as noted earlier, CSRs in the private sector can earn up to \$3,300 per day (without leaving their home).⁷ Notwithstanding money for recruitment and retention, California courts cannot pay CSRs the excessive rates they are earning in the private sector. Even if we could do so today, the private sector has such a demand for the CSRs that they would simply pay above whatever amount the Court was paying.
- People are not choosing a career as a CSR. The number of licensed CSRs is declining significantly: According to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, between FY 2013–14 and FY 2020–21, the number of total licensees has declined 17.1% and the number of new license applications has declined 67.2%.⁸ The National Court Reporters Association reported that the average age of its court reporters members is approximately 55 years old as of June 30, 2022,⁹ and 44% of all active licensed California CSRs were issued at least 30 years ago.¹⁰ In fact, one quarter of our Court's CSRs have over 25 years of service with the Court, meaning that their tenure with the Court is limited without sufficient replacement CSRs available, previewing a larger crisis on the horizon.

⁶ *Nation's Largest Trial Court Offers Substantial Incentives to Retrain and Recruit Official Court Reporters Amid Staffing Shortage*, February 1, 2023.

⁷ Government Code Section 69959 prevents court-employee CSRs from reporting remotely.

⁸ Department of Consumer Affairs: Data portal, www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml.

⁹ National Court Reporters Association, www.ncra.org/home/about-ncra/NCRA-Statistics.

¹⁰ Department of Consumer Affairs, Licensee List (as of Jan. 2023). www.dca.ca.gov/consumers/public_info/index.shtml.

- The result of decreased interest in the profession is the closure of CSR schools. Since 2011, the number of court reporting training programs in California has decreased from 16 to 9.¹¹ A similar trend has been seen nationwide as the number of open court reporter training programs approved by the National Court Reporters Association has declined from 54 in 2012 to 22 today.¹²
- The CSR licensing exam is notably difficult: Despite having spent years in court reporter training schools at significant expense, fewer than 20% of test-takers have passed the certification test over the past five years, resulting in an average of only 53 newly certified CSRs in the State of California per year.¹³
- Courts are competing against each other to recruit newly-licensed CSRs: According to a recent survey conducted by the Judicial Council of California, 74.5% of courts are actively recruiting CSRs. Since July 1, 2022, in the California courts, 97 CSRs vacated their positions and only 46 CSRs were hired, representing a net loss of 51 reporters. Of those 46 new hires, 34.8% came from other California courts.

The current situation is untenable and unacceptable for courts, judicial officers, attorneys and, most importantly, the litigants we serve and you represent. At the current rate of CSR attrition, our Court projects being unable to provide enough CSRs to cover even statutorily-mandated case types such as felony criminal and juvenile justice proceedings by 2024.

SB-662 is the first step in addressing this constitutional crisis. The bill balances the great value of and preference for court-employed CSRs (a goal we all share) with the reality of the supply inadequacy.

It cannot be lost on the Committee that the solution to this problem has already been sanctioned by the Legislature in allowing electronic recording in limited civil, certain criminal, and traffic matters. Recognizing that the Legislature endeavors to pass laws that ensure equal access and equal protection to all litigants no matter their income, passing SB-662 expands an already accepted method of capturing court proceedings. By authorizing electronic recording in all civil case types, litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil proceedings, who currently do not have access to any verbatim record of their proceedings, will join litigants in limited civil, misdemeanor, and traffic matters who benefit from access to an electronically-produced verbatim record of their proceedings.

We implore the Committee to act. Without this legislative solution, the Court cannot uphold our chief mission of providing timely and equal access to justice to all we serve.

¹¹ California Trial Court Consortium, *The Causes, Consequences, and Outlook of the Court Reporter Shortage in California and Beyond*, <https://www.siskiyou.courts.ca.gov/system/files?file=court-reporter-shortage-1-2022.pdf> and California Court Reporters Association webpage at <https://www.cal-ccra.org/court-reporting-schools>

¹² National Court Reporters Association: https://www.ncra.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/education/2015-ncra-annual-school-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=f1e37372_0 and <https://www.ncra.org/home/students-teachers/Schools-and-programs/ncra-approved-court-reporting-programs>

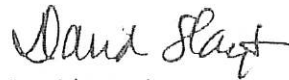
¹³ [Court Reporters Board Dictation Examination Statistics](#)

We are hopeful you and fellow members of the Senate Judiciary Committee will stand with the thousands of litigants – your constituents – who appear in courtrooms every day throughout California, where important and impactful decisions are made about their lives, children, finances, and more, and, yet, they leave without anything approaching a verbatim record of the proceedings. Passage of SB-662 would remedy this obvious manifestation of justice for the rich but not for the poor in our court system. We look forward to your support of this bill during your April 18 hearing. Thank you for continuing to support the Court’s efforts to expand and ensure access to justice for all of your constituents.

Sincerely,



Samantha P. Jessner
Presiding Judge



David W. Slayton
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court

c: Hon. Susan Rubio
Hon. Scott Wilk, Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Benjamin Allen, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Angelique V. Ashby, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Anna M. Caballero, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. María Elena Durazo, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. John Laird, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Dave Min, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Roger W. Niello, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Henry I. Stern, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Hon. Scott D. Wiener, Member of the Senate Judiciary Committee
Cory Jaspersen, Director of Governmental Affairs, Judicial Council of California
Shelley Curran, Chief Policy and Research Officer, Judicial Council of California



LACBA

LOS ANGELES COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

444 South Flower Street, Suite 2500 • Los Angeles, CA 90071
Telephone: 213.627.2727 • www.lacba.org

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins
California State Senate President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
California Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support for SB 662 (Rubio)

Dear Senators Atkins and Portantino and Members of the Senate
Appropriations Committee:

The Los Angeles County Bar Association (“LACBA”), which represents 20,000 lawyers and legal professionals in Los Angeles County, and the undersigned bar associations listed below write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 662. SB 662, authored by Senator Susan Rubio, aims to address the crisis in our California superior courts caused by the shortage of Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs) available to create a record of court proceedings. This hurts your constituents who are unable to obtain a transcript of their proceedings, because that record is often necessary to protect their rights on extremely significant personal and family matters.

In combination with measures being taken by the superior courts to retain and recruit CSRs, SB 662 is necessary to address the constitutional crisis caused by the fact that tens of thousands of Californians each month are currently deprived of the possibility of meaningful access to justice as a result of the lack of a verbatim record of proceedings.

The attached letter of Presiding Judge Samantha Jessner of the Los Angeles Superior Court eloquently summarizes the current dire situation. The shortage of CSRs impacts all 58 counties in California. In Los Angeles County alone, in January and February of 2023, more than 52,000 court proceedings took place without a CSR or electronic recording to capture what occurred during the proceedings.

At the current rate and under current legal restrictions on electronic recording, the Los Angeles Superior Court alone projects that in 2023 more than 300,000 cases will be heard without any official transcript or record of proceedings. But this is a statewide problem.

This shocking shortfall in the availability of CSRs affects most of all the low- and moderate-income litigants who cannot afford the very high costs associated with court reporter fees. Important rights relating to family law matters — including custody, visitation, relocation, and protection of children, protection of victims of domestic violence, rights to alimony, and other matters — are being adjudicated without any verbatim transcript. This adversely affects the parties' ability to effectively enforce or appeal the court's determinations. Similarly, important other civil matters relating to probate and resolution of important civil disputes are being adjudicated without any verbatim record of proceedings.

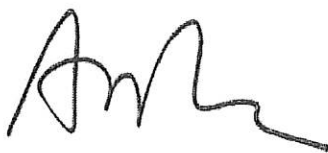
The need for SB 662 is urgent. The potential costs of implementing the bill — in comparison to the deprivation of rights currently experienced by those served by our courts who cannot afford court reporters — are minimal. This is especially so where many courtrooms already have the means to electronically record court proceedings, and funds exist to further equip courtrooms with the means to electronically record court proceedings.

Accordingly, LACBA and the undersigned bar associations and legal services organizations urge that you release SB 662 from the Appropriations Committee, and use your considerable influence to bring competing views together to reach an effective resolution of, and solution for, the severe shortage of CSRs and the serious impact on constituents who need to use the court system.

We are in the process of collecting additional signatories to this letter and will update you as those additional organizations join. Please see also the attached letters from the California Lawyers Association, representing 80,000 attorneys statewide, in support of SB 662.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and for your support in advancing SB 662.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann I. Park', with a stylized, flowing script.

Ann I. Park
President
Los Angeles County Bar Association

Jeremy Evans
President
California Lawyers Association

Silvia R. Argueta
Executive Director
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Mónica Ramírez Almadani
President & CEO
Helen & Morgan Chu CEO Distinguished Chair
Public Counsel

Diego Cartagena
President & CEO
Bet Tzedek Legal Services

Kate Marr
Executive Director
Community Legal Aid SoCal

Betty L. Nordwind
Executive Director
Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law

Ana M. Storey
Executive Director
LevittQuinn Family Law Center

Carmen E. McDonald
Executive Director
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

Dennis Smeal
Executive Director
Los Angeles Dependency Lawyers, Inc. and Dependency Legal Services San Diego

Connie Chung Joe
Chief Executive Officer
Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California (AJSOCAL)

Minh T. Nguyen
President
Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles

Ninos Saroukhanioff
President
Association of Southern California Defense Counsel

Magdalena Casas
President
Mexican American Bar Association

Janet Hong
President
Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles

Erica Yen
President
Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Los Angeles County

Nina Hong
President
Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association

Monica Min
President
Korean American Bar Association of Southern California

Harumi Hata
President
Japanese American Bar Association

Rudy Sato
President
Arab American Lawyers Association of Southern California

Johnny White
President
Irish American Bar Association – Los Angeles

Mercedes Cook
President
Philippine American Bar Association

Angela Zanin
President
Italian American Lawyers Association

Jasmine Horton
President
Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles

Janet Inoue
President
South Bay Bar Association

Tracy Nakaoka
President
Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Association

Cynthia N. Flores
President
Latina Lawyers Bar Association

Attachments

cc: Hon. Susan Rubio
Hon. Brian W. Jones, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Angelique V. Ashby, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Steve Bradford, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Kelly Seyarto, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Aisha Wahab, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Scott D. Wiener, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee

CALIFORNIA
LAWYERS
ASSOCIATION

April 12, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Room 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 662 (Rubio), as amended March 20, 2023 - Support

Dear Senator Umberg:

The California Lawyers Association (CLA) supports SB 662, which authorizes a court to order that, in any civil case, the action or proceeding be electronically recorded if an official reporter or an official reporter pro tempore is unavailable, as specified.

In *Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, the California Supreme Court stated that “the absence of a verbatim record of trial court proceedings will often have a devastating effect on a litigant's ability to have an appeal of a trial court judgment decided on the merits.” Even without an appeal, the absence of a verbatim record can have an adverse impact on litigants in the trial court when, for example, a dispute or uncertainty arises about the court's decision or the basis of that decision.

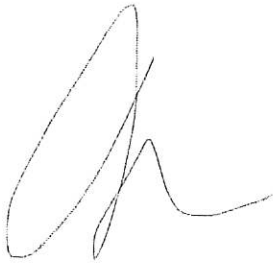
Certified shorthand reporters are the preferred way to create a verbatim record. Consistent with this preference, SB 662 requires the court to make every effort to hire a court reporter for an action or proceeding before electing to have the action or proceeding be electronically recorded. If a transcript of court proceedings is requested, the bill requires the court to provide a certified shorthand reporter the right of first refusal to transcribe the electronically recorded proceeding. In addition, the bill takes steps to address the court reporter shortage by permitting the Court Reporters Board to issue a provisional certificate to an individual who has passed the National Court Reporters Association exam or who is eligible to take the examination to become a certified shorthand reporter. The bill also requires the Judicial Council to collect information from courts regarding how they are utilizing funds appropriated to recruit and hire court reporters, and to report to the Legislature the efforts courts have taken to hire and retain court reporters and how the funds appropriated for this purpose have been spent.

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg, Chair
Senate Judiciary Committee
April 12, 2023
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Unfortunately, the number of court reporters is not keeping pace with the need, and parties are often left with no verbatim record at all. This threatens access to justice, particularly for those who cannot afford to pay for their own private court reporter when the court does not have enough court reporters for civil cases. SB 662 will increase access to justice by addressing the critical shortage of court reporters.

For these reasons, CLA supports SB 662.

Sincerely,

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Jeremy M. Evans
President



April 17, 2023

The Honorable Richard Roth, Chair
Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development
1021 O Street, Suite 7510
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 662 (Rubio), as amended March 20, 2023 - Support

Dear Senator Roth:

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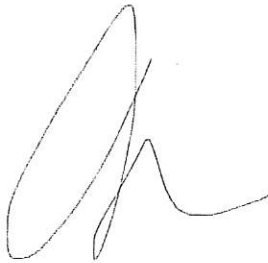
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The Honorable Richard Roth, Chair
Senate Committee on Business, Professions and Economic Development
April 17, 2023
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Jeremy M. Evans
President

SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
PRESIDING JUDGE



DAVID SLAYTON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
CLERK OF COURT

May 4, 2023

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee Chair
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 662 – Courts: Court Reporting, as amended April 27, 2023

Dear Senator Portantino and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

All stakeholders agree: the current shocking shortfall in the number of Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs) in the California trial courts is a constitutional crisis, with tens of thousands of your constituents each month now deprived of the possibility of meaningful access to justice for the lack of a verbatim record of proceedings.

In 2018, the California Supreme Court found that the lack of a verbatim record will “frequently be fatal” to a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.¹ This falls heaviest on our communities’ most vulnerable litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil cases, where the Government Code now prohibits the Court from using electronic recording to capture a verbatim record. Many of these litigants are self-represented and unable to afford the exorbitant cost of hiring a private CSR, which can cost up to \$3,300 a day.² This places a verbatim record out of the reach of those without significant means, resulting in unequal access to justice for the vast majority of litigants in our Court.

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⁴ Family Code Section 3020

⁵ Government Code Section 69957 currently permits electronic recording in limited civil, infraction, and misdemeanor cases.

SB-662, filed by Senator Susan Rubio and sponsored by the Family Violence Appellate Project, would:

- require Court Reporters Board of California (CRB) to evaluate the necessity of requiring applicants who have passed either the National Court Reporters Association's (NCRA) or the National Verbatim Reporters Association's (NVRA) certification examination to demonstrate competency as a certified shorthand reporter and to submit its findings to the Legislature during their upcoming regular Joint Sunset Review Oversight Hearings;
- authorize the CRB to replace the state-specific examination requirement with the NCRA's or the NVRA's certification examination if the CRB concludes that the current state-specific examination is not necessary to establish a minimum level of competency of shorthand reporters and that the examination poses a barrier to licensure as a shorthand reporter;
- if a CSR is unavailable, authorize the Court to electronically record all civil proceedings if approved electronic recording equipment is available;
- require the Court to provide a CSR the right of first refusal to transcribe an electronically reported proceeding; and
- require the Court to make every effort to hire a CSR before electing to electronically record actions or proceedings.

The Court greatly values our CSRs and recognizes their intrinsic role in the justice system. That is why we are grateful for the Court's share of the \$30 million provided by the Legislature this fiscal year to bolster our efforts to recruit and retain CSRs. The Court has undertaken a vigorous and high-profile effort, announcing in February of this year robust signing and retention bonuses, competitive student loan forgiveness and a generous finder's fee.⁶ We are hopeful these efforts will yield an expanded CSR workforce to fill the existing 100-plus CSR vacancies.

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- CSRs can make much more money in the private sector: While the median court-employed CSR salary plus benefits **exceeds \$183,940** (51% more than other non-manager court positions), as noted earlier, CSRs in the private sector can earn up to \$3,300 per day (without leaving their home).⁷ Notwithstanding money for recruitment and retention, California courts cannot pay CSRs the excessive rates they are earning in the private sector. Even if we could do so today, the private sector has such a demand for the CSRs that they would simply pay above whatever amount the Court was paying.
- People are not choosing a career as a CSR. The number of licensed CSRs is declining significantly: According to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, between FY

⁶ *Nation's Largest Trial Court Offers Substantial Incentives to Retrain and Recruit Official Court Reporters Amid Staffing Shortage*, February 1, 2023.

⁷ Government Code Section 69959 prevents court-employee CSRs from reporting remotely.

2013–14 and FY 2020–21, the number of total licensees has declined 17.1% and the number of new license applications has declined 67.2%.⁸ The National Court Reporters Association reported that the average age of its court reporters members is approximately 55 years old as of June 30, 2022,⁹ and 44% of all active licensed California CSRs were issued at least 30 years ago.¹⁰ In fact, one quarter of the our Court’s CSRs have over 25 years of service with the Court, meaning that their tenure with the Court is limited without sufficient replacement CSRs available, previewing a larger crisis on the horizon.

- The result of decreased interest in the profession is the closure of CSR schools. Since 2011, the number of court reporting training programs in California has decreased from 16 to 9.¹¹ A similar trend has been seen nationwide as the number of open court reporter training programs approved by the National Court Reporters Association has declined from 54 in 2012 to 22 today.¹²
- The CSR licensing exam is notably difficult: Despite having spent years in court reporter training schools at significant expense, fewer than 20% of test-takers have passed the certification test over the past five years, resulting in an average of only 53 newly certified CSRs in the State of California per year.¹³
- Courts are competing against each other to recruit newly-licensed CSRs: According to a recent survey conducted by the Judicial Council of California, 74.5% of courts are actively recruiting CSRs. Since July 1, 2022, in the California courts, 97 CSRs vacated their positions and only 46 CSRs were hired, representing a net loss of 51 reporters. Of those 46 new hires, 34.8% came from other California courts.

The current situation is untenable and unacceptable for courts, judicial officers, attorneys and, most importantly, the litigants we serve and you represent. At the current rate of CSR attrition, our Court projects being unable to provide enough CSRs to cover even statutorily-mandated case types such as felony criminal and juvenile justice proceedings by 2024.

SB-662 is the first step in addressing this constitutional crisis. The bill balances the great value of and preference for court-employed CSRs (a goal we all share) with the reality of the supply inadequacy.

It cannot be lost on the Committee that the solution to this problem has already been sanctioned by the Legislature in allowing electronic recording in limited civil, certain criminal,

⁸ Department of Consumer Affairs: Data portal, www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml.

⁹ National Court Reporters Association, www.ncra.org/home/about-ncra/NCRA-Statistics.

¹⁰ Department of Consumer Affairs, Licensee List (as of Jan. 2023), www.dca.ca.gov/consumers/public_info/index.shtml.

¹¹ California Trial Court Consortium, *The Causes, Consequences, and Outlook of the Court Reporter Shortage in California and Beyond*, <https://www.siskiyou.courts.ca.gov/system/files?file=court-reporter-shortage-1-2022.pdf> and California Court Reporters Association webpage at <https://www.cal-ccra.org/court-reporting-schools>

¹² National Court Reporters Association: https://www.ncra.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/education/2015-ncra-annual-school-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=f1e37372_0 and <https://www.ncra.org/home/students-teachers/Schools-and-programs/ncra-approved-court-reporting-programs>

¹³ [Court Reporters Board Dictation Examination Statistics](#)

and traffic matters. Recognizing that the Legislature endeavors to pass laws that ensure equal access and equal protection to all litigants no matter their income, passing SB-662 expands an already accepted method of capturing court proceedings. In fact, in 2022, over 500 appeals of matters in evictions, criminal cases, and other limited jurisdiction matters were electronically recorded and reviewed and decided by our Appellate Division without incident. By authorizing electronic recording in all civil case types, litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil proceedings, who currently do not have access to any verbatim record of their proceedings, will join litigants in limited civil, misdemeanor, and traffic matters who benefit from access to an electronically-produced verbatim record of their proceedings.

We implore the Committee to act. Without this legislative solution, the Court cannot uphold our chief mission of providing timely and equal access to justice to all we serve.

We are hopeful you and fellow members of the Senate Appropriations Committee will stand with the thousands of litigants – your constituents – who appear in courtrooms every day throughout California, where important and impactful decisions are made about their lives, children, finances, and more, and, yet, they leave without anything approaching a verbatim record of the proceedings. Passage of SB-662 would remedy this obvious manifestation of justice for the rich but not for the poor in our court system. We look forward to your support of this bill during your May 8 hearing. Thank you for continuing to support the Court's efforts to expand and ensure access to justice for all of your constituents.

Sincerely,



Samantha P. Jessner
Presiding Judge



David W. Slayton
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court

c: Hon. Susan Rubio
Hon. Brian W. Jones, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Angelique V. Ashby, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Steven Bradford, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Kelly Seyarto, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Aisha Wahab, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Scott D. Wiener, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Cory Jaspersen, Director of Governmental Affairs, Judicial Council of California
Shelley Curran, Chief Policy and Research Officer, Judicial Council of California

SAMANTHA P. JESSNER
PRESIDING JUDGE



DAVID SLAYTON
EXECUTIVE OFFICER/
CLERK OF COURT

January 10, 2024

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee Chair
State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 662 (Rubio) Courts: Court Reporters, as amended April 27, 2023

Dear Senator Portantino and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

The current shortfall in the number of Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs) in the California trial courts is a constitutional crisis, with tens of thousands of your constituents each month deprived of the possibility of meaningful access to justice for the lack of a verbatim record of proceedings.

We implore this committee to **act now** to solve this crisis with a readily available solution: pass without haste SB 662 (Rubio) from committee, which would revise the restrictions on electronic recording contained in Government Code section 69957. These restrictions ultimately create a significant equal access to justice issue by permitting litigants in misdemeanor, limited civil and infraction matters to have access to appellate review while denying such review to litigants in family law, probate and unlimited civil cases. Put differently, without this change, a person who is facing eviction is entitled to a record created by electronic recording but a child custody matter in which the child will be allowed to have no or little contact with a parent is not entitled to a record of any sort; only silence.

We also want to assure you that our court is not seeking to eliminate court reporters' jobs; in that regard, look at our actions. The Court greatly values our CSRs and recognizes their intrinsic role in the justice system. That is why we are grateful for the Court's share of the \$30 million provided by the Legislature this fiscal year to bolster our efforts to recruit and retain CSRs. The Court has undertaken a vigorous and high-profile effort, announcing robust signing and retention bonuses, competitive student loan forgiveness and a generous finder's fee.¹

Despite our Court's strident efforts, this crisis has not abated since we last wrote to you regarding this issue in May 2023. In 2023 alone, because of the severe court reporter shortage

¹ [Nation's Largest Trial Court Offers Substantial Incentives to Retrain and Recruit Official Court Reporters Amid Staffing Shortage](#), February 1, 2023. Incentives increased in September 2023: [Nation's Largest Trial Court Expands Unprecedented Recruitment and Retention Campaign to Address Chronic Court Reporter Shortage](#)

and statutory restrictions on electronic recording, **over 300,000 hearings took place in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County without a CSR or electronic recording to capture what occurred during the proceedings**, leaving litigants without access to a verbatim record of their proceedings.

In 2018, the California Supreme Court found that the lack of a verbatim record will “frequently be fatal” to a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.² This falls heaviest on our communities’ most vulnerable litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil cases, where the Government Code now prohibits the Court from using electronic recording to capture a verbatim record. Many of these litigants are self-represented and unable to afford the exorbitant cost of hiring a private CSR, which can cost up to \$3,300 a day.³ This places a verbatim record out of the reach of those without significant means, resulting in unequal access to justice for the vast majority of litigants in our Court.

It is not hyperbole to say: No record, no meaningful access to appellate review.

We, on behalf of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County, implore the Legislature to fix this problem **now** via the means set out in SB 662. We reject that the problem represents a mere temporary market imbalance remediable by higher wages and modified working conditions. It is our experience, and that of virtually every other California Superior Court, that a sufficient number of qualified CSRs are neither available now nor will be into the future. The proposition that the “supply of reporters [is] currently adequate” is wrong.⁴ We would be very pleased if there were such a supply and would gladly welcome them to fill our over 100 CSR vacancies. But there is not, and we all need to look that fact squarely in the face. The question is: What are we, collectively, going to do about it?

The answer cannot be further ‘wait and see.’

This issue continues to impact litigants **now** up and down California. A parent needing appellate review **now** of a family law judge’s decision to allow her three-year-old to move from California to New York (and thus practically eliminating ‘frequent and continuing contact’) cannot wait and see.⁵ A parent needing appellate review **now** of a family law judge’s decision not to permit him to have custody of his eight-year-old daughter because her mother’s living space is larger cannot wait and see. A spouse needing appellate review **now** of a family law judge’s decision not to modify a large spousal support order which she cannot pay as a result of an injury and layoff from work cannot wait and see.

² *Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, 608, fn. 1.

³ Data provided by a survey of 49 private consumer attorneys. It is unknown how much of the court reporter rate charged by companies is provided to the reporter in the form of compensation and how much is kept by the company.

⁴ Senate Bill 662 OPPOSE Letter to Senator Susan Rubio from SEIU California, Orange County Employees Association, Deposition Reporters Association, International Union of Operating Engineers, AFCSME, California, CA Court Reporters Association and CA Labor Federation, dated April 3, 2023.

⁵ [Family Code Section 3020](#)

A verbatim transcript of proceedings provides more than potential appellate review. Very often self-represented litigants find themselves baffled or overwhelmed by their court proceedings and eventually obtain counsel, pro bono or otherwise, to aid them. A verbatim record enables the litigant to review what occurred during the proceeding and enables them to show it to a lawyer.

Just as litigants in limited civil and misdemeanor proceedings now have the benefit of a verbatim transcript via electronic recording, so, too, should the litigants in the real-life examples above.⁶ In fact, electronic recording for permitted case types is currently installed in hundreds of our courtrooms and provides litigants access to an accurate verbatim transcript of their proceedings. That electronic recording transcripts are not the equal to one created by a CSR – a proposition that is not borne out by modern technology and our experience with over 500 appeals handled by our Court per year derived from electronic recording that are accurate and competent – is a classic example of making the perfect the enemy of the good. The alternative is the current situation, where there is no verbatim record at all. It cannot be correct that the answer is simply to deny litigants *any* verbatim transcript while we explore all possible avenues for expanding the pool of CSRs to meet the need in our courts today.

The shortage of CSRs impacts all 58 counties in California. It's worth repeating that in Los Angeles County alone, over 300,000 court proceedings took place in 2023 without a CSR or electronic recording to capture what occurred during the proceedings, forcing hundreds of thousands of litigants to leave court without any official transcript of what transpired in their case, effectively eliminating their ability to appeal.

SB 662, filed by Senator Susan Rubio and co-sponsored by the Legal Aid Association of California and the Family Violence Appellate Project, would:

- require the Court Reporters Board of California (CRB) to evaluate the necessity of requiring applicants who have passed either the National Court Reporters Association's (NCRA) or the National Verbatim Reporters Association's (NVRA) certification examination to demonstrate competency as a certified shorthand reporter and to submit its findings to the Legislature during their upcoming regular Joint Sunset Review Oversight Hearings;
- authorize the CRB to replace the state-specific examination requirement with the NCRA's or the NVRA's certification examination if the CRB concludes that the current state-specific examination is not necessary to establish a minimum level of competency of shorthand reporters and that the examination poses a barrier to licensure as a shorthand reporter;
- if a CSR is unavailable, authorize the Court to electronically record all civil proceedings if approved electronic recording equipment is available;

⁶ [Government Code Section 69957](#) currently permits electronic recording in limited civil, infraction, and misdemeanor cases.

- require the Court to provide a CSR the right of first refusal to transcribe an electronically reported proceeding; and
- require the Court to make every effort to hire a CSR before electing to electronically record actions or proceedings.

Despite our ambitious recruitment and retention efforts, the Court's CSR vacancy rate has only grown over the last year. In fact, in the 11 months since we announced significant recruitment and retention bonuses, the Court's CSR workforce has continued to decline. This chronic and increasing vacancy rate is the result of several factors:

- CSRs can make much more money in the private sector: While the median court-employed CSR salary plus benefits **exceeds \$183,940** (51% more than other non-manager court positions), as noted earlier, CSRs in the private sector can earn up to \$3,300 per day (without leaving their home).⁷ Notwithstanding money for recruitment and retention, California courts cannot pay CSRs the rates they are earning in the private sector. Even if we could do so today, the private sector has such a demand for the CSRs that they would simply pay above whatever amount the Court was paying.
- People are not choosing a career as a CSR. The number of licensed CSRs is declining significantly: According to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, between FY 2013–14 and FY 2021–22, the number of total licensees has declined 19.2% and the number of new license applications has declined 70.1%.⁸ The National Court Reporters Association reported that the average age of its court reporters members is approximately 55 years old as of December 31, 2022,⁹ and 44% of all active licensed California CSRs were issued at least 30 years ago.¹⁰ In fact, one quarter of the Court's CSRs have over 25 years of service with the Court, meaning that their tenure with the Court is limited without sufficient replacement CSRs available, previewing a larger crisis on the horizon.
- The result of decreased interest in the profession is the closure of CSR schools. Since 2011, the number of court reporting training programs in California has decreased from 17 to 8.¹¹ A similar trend has been seen nationwide as the number of open court reporter training programs approved by the National Court Reporters Association has declined from 54 in 2012 to 22 today.¹²
- The CSR licensing exam is notably difficult: Of the 271 individuals who applied to take the skills (dictation) portion of the past three California certified shorthand reporter exams (held Nov. 2022, Mar. 2023 and July 2023), only 31.7% passed.¹³

⁷ Government Code Section 69959 prevents court-employee CSRs from reporting remotely.

⁸ Department of Consumer Affairs: Data portal, www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml.

⁹ National Court Reporters Association, www.ncra.org/home/about-ncra/NCRA-Statistics.

¹⁰ Department of Consumer Affairs, Licensee List (as of Jan. 2023). www.dca.ca.gov/consumers/public_info/index.shtml.

¹¹ Bloomberg Law, *Aspiring Court Reporters Wait as California Courts Struggle*, December 11, 2023

¹² National Court Reporters Association: https://www.ncra.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/education/2015-ncra-annual-school-report-final.pdf?sfvrsn=f1e37372_0 and <https://www.ncra.org/home/students-teachers/Schools-and-programs/ncra-approved-court-reporting-programs>

¹³ Court Reporters Board, School Examination Statistics, www.courtreportersboard.ca.gov/applicants/examstats.shtml.

- Courts are competing against each other to recruit newly licensed CSRs: According to a recent survey conducted by the Judicial Council of California, 74% of courts are actively recruiting CSRs. From January 1 – September 30, 2023, 84.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) CSRs vacated their positions in California courts and only 69.3 FTE CSRs were hired, representing a net loss of 14.8 FTE CSRs. Of those 69.3 new hires, 23.8% came from other California courts.¹⁴

The current situation remains untenable for courts, judicial officers, attorneys and, most importantly, the litigants we serve. At the current rate of CSR attrition, our Court projects being unable to provide enough CSRs to cover even statutorily mandated case types such as felony criminal and juvenile justice proceedings within the next year.

SB 662 is the first step in addressing this constitutional crisis. The bill balances the great value of and preference for court-employed CSRs (a goal we all share) with the reality of the supply inadequacy.

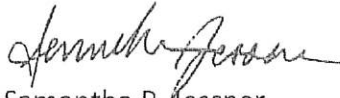
The Committee should be aware that the solution to this problem has already been sanctioned by the Legislature in allowing electronic recording in limited civil, certain criminal, and traffic matters. Passing SB 662 expands an already accepted method of capturing court proceedings. In fact, in 2022, over 500 appeals of matters in evictions, criminal cases, and other limited jurisdiction matters were electronically recorded and reviewed and decided by our Appellate Division without incident. By authorizing electronic recording in all civil case types, litigants in family law, probate, and unlimited civil proceedings, who currently do not have access to any verbatim record of their proceedings, will join litigants in limited civil, misdemeanor, and traffic matters who benefit from access to an electronically-produced verbatim record of their proceedings when a CSR is unavailable.

We implore the Committee to act. Without this legislative solution, the Court cannot uphold our chief mission of providing timely and equal access to justice to all we serve.

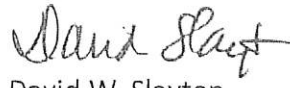
We are hopeful you and fellow members of the Senate Appropriations Committee will stand with the thousands of litigants who appear in courtrooms every day throughout California, where important and impactful decisions are made about their lives, children, finances, and more, and, yet, they leave without anything approaching a verbatim record of the proceedings. Passage of SB 662 would remedy this inequitable situation which results in a record being available only to those who have the means to pay for a private CSR. We strongly urge your support of this bill during your January 18 hearing. Thank you for continuing to support the Court's efforts to expand and ensure access to justice for all Californians.

Sincerely,

¹⁴ Court Reporter Recruitment, Retention, and Attrition dashboard, www.courts.ca.gov/76328.htm.



Samantha P. Jessner
Presiding Judge



David W. Slayton
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court

- c: Hon. Susan Rubio
Hon. Brian W. Jones, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Angelique V. Ashby, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Steven Bradford, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Kelly Seyarto, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Aisha Wahab, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Scott D. Wiener, Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Cory Jaspersen, Director of Governmental Affairs, Judicial Council of California
Shelley Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California

SB 662: Courts: court reporters

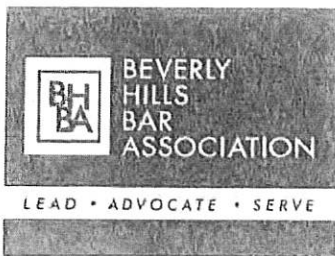
Supporting Organizations (as of 4/21/2023)

**Taken From 4/21/2023 Senate Business, Professions and Economic
Development Committee Analysis Published Here:**

Support:

- A Window Between Worlds
- Advocates for Child Empowerment and Safety
- Asian Americans for Community Involvement
- Asian Women's Shelter
- Bet Tzedek
- California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform
- California Defense Counsel
- California Judges Association
- California Lawyers Association
- California Partnership to End Domestic Violence
- California Protective Parents Association
- California Women's Law Center
- Central California Family Crisis Center, INC.
- Centro Legal de la Raza
- Community Legal Aid Socal
- Consumer Attorneys of California
- Disability Rights California
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
- Elder Law and Disability Rights Center
- Empower Yolo
- Family Violence Appellate Project
- Family Violence Law Center
- Healthy Alternatives to Violent Environments
- Impact Fund
- Inner City Law Center
- Judicial Council of California
- Legal Aid Association of California
- Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
- Legal Aid of Marin
- Legal Aid Society of San Diego
- Legal Assistance to the Elderly
- Legal Services for Prisoners With Children
- Legislative Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse

- Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
- Lumina Alliance
- McGeorge School of Law Community Legal Services
- National Health Law Program
- Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County
- Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence
- OneJustice
- Solano County Superior Court
- Superior Court of Los Angeles County
- The People Concern
- Western Center on Law & Poverty



May 17, 2023

Senator Susan Rubio
C/O Ms. Krystal Moreno
Legislative Director
1021 O Street, Suite 8710
Sacramento, CA 95814

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Dear Senator Rubio:

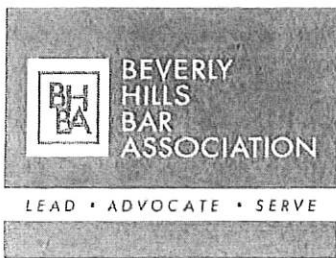
The Beverly Hills Bar Association is an organization of more than 4,000 legal professionals founded in 1931. The mission of the bar is to lead, advocate, and serve the greater Los Angeles legal community, including through legislative advocacy relevant to our members. BHBA has one of the largest Family Law Sections in the country, with that Section representing a significant portion of BHBA's membership. The recent loss of court reporters provided by the court in Los Angeles county in November 2022 has impacted all such members and litigants in the civil court system, particularly in the family court system.

On behalf of the Board of Governors of the Beverly Hills Bar Association, I am writing to express our strong support for SB 662, a bill that will have a significant and positive impact on the civil and family court system in California. By allowing electronic recording in civil courtrooms, including family law courtrooms, and expanding the licensing of court reporters, SB 662 will help ensure that all Californians have access to justice, regardless of their income or location.

California's family courts have been grappling with a shortage of court reporters, which has disproportionately affected low-income litigants, many of whom represent themselves in court. The lack of an official record of court proceedings can lead to confusion, miscommunication, and difficulties in enforcing court orders. It also makes it difficult to appeal cases as there is no official record, limiting access to justice. By amending Section 69957 of the Government Code and adding Section 69957.5, SB 662 addresses this issue by permitting the use of electronic recordings when court reporters are unavailable and mandating that the Judicial Council adopt rules and standards for their use.

Furthermore, there is roughly a population of 39 million people in California. The lack of court reporters affects approximately well over 13 million people or approximately one third of the population of California. The result of this is that at least a third of the population in the most-populous cities and counties in California will face a different quality of justice without this simple change to electronic recordings than people in the rest of the state. The bill also offers protections to court reporters because electronic recordings are only to be used when there is no availability of an official court reporter.

Currently, the average cost of a private court reporter is crippling (the only option for many civil litigants). The appearance fee just to show up is up to



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\$3200 a day depending on the court reporter firm and their availability. As there is a shortage of court reporters, this fee may only increase in time. This does not include the cost for the preparation of transcripts which can cost as much as several hundred dollars to several thousand dollars depending on the length of the proceedings, as court reporters often charge by the page and by word and based off of the amount of time that the document needs to be prepared. This places it out of the price of many people – the average minimum wage job in Los Angeles county earns only \$2600 a month. The inability to have a court reporter disproportionately affects low income litigants, who are mostly in pro per and already at a disadvantage by representing themselves (which is at least 70% of all family law cases). It is an even more impossible choice for families to make to choose between having a lawyer or having a court reporter in their family law matter.

The existing technology and infrastructure in the Los Angeles County court system can address this issue. The courts have an LACC court system which has almost all civil proceedings available for remote appearances through use of video and audio technology. This is a system with pre-existing infrastructure in the courtrooms, and can be adapted, if not already in place, for judicial council approved use to record proceedings.

SB 662 is a vital piece of legislation that will help level the playing field for Californians navigating the civil and family court system. It will provide an adequate record for all litigants, which is essential for the enforcement of court orders, including those related to domestic violence and child custody. By addressing the court reporter shortage and enabling the use of electronic recordings, this bill will make the pursuit of justice more accessible and equitable for all Californians.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your commitment to improving access to justice in our state.

Sincerely,

MALCOLM MCNEIL

Partner, ArgentFox Schiff LLP
President, Beverly Hills Bar Association

ALPHONSE F. PROVINZIANO, ESQ.

Certified Family Law Specialist
Chairperson, Solutions for Family Law Committee
Secretary-Treasurer, Beverly Hills Bar Association Board of Governors



California Protective Parents Association

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol Building, Room 412
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: SB 662 (Rubio) Court Record SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

California Protective Parents Association is a non-profit organization focused on protecting abused children in family court custody disputes through research, education and advocacy.

We are writing in strong SUPPORT of SB 662 Court Record bill by Senator Susan Rubio. It is a common sense response to a crisis in our courts. A national survey by Geraldine Stahly PhD found that over half (57%) of California family courts hearings were held without court reporters.

The lack of court reporters in California courts affects the safety and rights of survivors of domestic violence who rely on the court for critical orders to protect them and their families including restraining orders, child custody and visitation orders, spousal and child support orders, orders declaring debt was caused by domestic abuse, and many others. **Court reporters are not required to be at these hearings.** However, a record of what happens at these hearings is necessary to have orders enforced by law enforcement and the courts, to challenge wrong or dangerous orders, and because these cases often last years in the courts.

There are not enough court reporters to cover all the courts. Litigants must pay high prices for a live court reporter which creates a two-tiered justice system. Rich people get the gold standard of live court reporters. The rest of the litigants do not even get a record of their hearing. Electronic recording works. It is being used in evictions, small claims, criminal misdemeanors, and infractions cases. The technology is there now and justice demands we use it. We also need to hold courts accountable to recruit, hire and retain court reporters. SB 662 does both.

We urge you to approve SB 662, a critical bill to ensure justice for all.

Sincerely,
Sandy Ross, President

2938 Adeline Street, Oakland CA 94608 310-910-1380
www.cprotectiveparents.org



May 5, 2023

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7630
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support Letter SB 662 (Rubio) Universal Access to Court Records: Electronic Recording

Dear Chair Portantino:

Family Violence Appellate Project, co-sponsor of SB 662, along with 14 other organizations serving domestic violence survivors writes in enthusiastic support of SB 662. As organizations that supports survivors of domestic violence, we know the importance of a verbatim record of court proceedings. Our clients rely on the court for critical orders to protect them and their families including restraining orders, child custody and visitation orders, spousal and child support orders, orders declaring debt was caused by domestic abuse, and many others. Court reporters are not required to be at these hearings. However, a record of what happens at these hearings is necessary for many important reasons.

First, there is a particular need for a reporter's transcript in family law proceedings involving domestic violence issues because law enforcement officers are often called upon to enforce domestic violence restraining orders, or child custody and visitation orders that address family violence issues. In these cases, transcripts are needed to craft an accurate post-hearing written order that can be enforced by law enforcement officers.

Second, in custody and visitation cases where the issues are litigated and revisited over many years, transcripts are needed for the court to assess whether there have been significant changed circumstances since the initial determination. Having the transcript from the initial custody or visitation determination provides the court with a factual baseline of the parties' previous behavior to help the judge assess whether alterations to custody or visitation schedules are warranted.

Third, in many California counties, judges serve only one or two years in family court before moving on to another courtroom assignment. As a result, domestic violence survivors are assigned to multiple judges if the case spans more than one or two years, which happens frequently as parents request revisions to custody and visitation determinations over time. Without a transcript detailing the precise basis for

the original order, the new family law judge is at a disadvantage in assessing and handling the case.

Fourth, the lack of a reporter's transcript is a particularly severe problem for appeals in family violence cases where the volume of family law and domestic violence cases means that written opinions are the exception, not the rule. As a result, it is nearly impossible to appeal wrong or dangerous decisions since a party may not raise evidentiary issues, or other issues dependent on trial court proceedings or rulings not included in a written order, unless there is a reporter's transcript. (See *Jameson v. Desta* (2015) 241 Cal.App.4th 491, 504 [holding that because "the record on appeal does not contain a reporter's transcript," Jameson was "precluded from obtaining a reversal of the trial court's ruling granting Desta's motion for nonsuit"]; *Foust v. San Jose Construction Co.* (2011) 198 Cal.App.4th 181, 185-186) ["In numerous situations, appellate courts have refused to reach the merits of an appellant's claims because no reporter's transcript of a pertinent proceeding or a suitable substitute was provided."].)

Since 2015 people who qualify for a fee waiver have had the right to request a free court reporter. However, what we know from experience is that courts often have to continue our clients' cases for weeks or months before a court reporter is available. Preparing to go to court repeatedly is traumatic for our clients and stretches our agencies resources unnecessarily. **It also unnecessarily strains courts resources.**

SB 662 has the capacity to change this dynamic, even with no or few additional financial resources. Our best information is that nearly half of the courts in California are already equipped with electronic recording equipment, because there are many types of cases that can be electronically recorded already. SB 662 will allow courts to turn on this equipment in other civil cases, including domestic violence and family law matters, when a court reporter is not available. The additional costs to monitor the equipment, store the digital record, and respond to requests for these records will be minimal, and well worth the results.

In addition, 51 of California's 58 courts use Zoom for remote hearings. SB 662 could allow the 51 of 58 county courts that use zoom for remote hearings to record via zoom, subject to the existing electronic recording requirements and rules. While dedicated funds for court reporters can never be used for electronic recording costs, courts could use other parts of their budgets to equip additional hearings or to hire recording equipment monitors, technicians, and clerks to properly store and control access to electronic recordings.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the costs to California as a whole, when verbatim records are not available. Gender-based violence is a leading cause of homelessness.¹ Likewise, domestic violence survivors often lose employment as a

¹ (McLaughlin, 2017).

result of abuse.² California has strong laws to protect survivors from experiencing homelessness and economic deprivation as a result of abuse. However, those laws cannot be implemented if wrong decisions are insulated from appeals and right decisions cannot be enforced because of a lack of a record. Without a record litigants will have no choice but to return to court repeatedly and courts will bear the cost of numerous trial court hearings to rehash already determined questions of fact and law, or to try and enforce unrecorded decisions.

For these reasons we strongly support SB 662 and urge this committee's aye vote on SB 662.

Sincerely,

FAMILY VIOLENCE APPELLATE PROJECT



Jennafer Dorfman Wagner, Esq.
Director of Programs

Erin Scott
Family Violence Law Center

Carmen McDonald
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice

Lynnette Irlmeier
Empower Yolo

Mary Culver
Central California Family Crisis Center, Inc.

Orchid Pusey
Asian Women's Shelter

Jennifer Adams
Lumina Alliance

² U. J. of Gender, Soc. Policy & the L. 987, 996-997 (2011).

Aylin Acikalin
ADZ Law LLC

Christy Turek Rials
A Window Between Worlds

May Rico
Healthy Alternatives to Violent Environments
(HAVEN)

Colsaria Henderson
Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence

Vaughn Villaverde, MPH
Asian Americans for Community Involvement
(AACI)

Kristin Aster
The People Concern

Melissa Knight-Fine
Legislative Coalition To Prevent Child Abuse

Christine Smith
California Partnership to End Domestic
Violence

CC: Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Brian W. Jones
Senator Angelique V. Ashby
Senator Steven Bradford
Senator Kelly Seyarto
Senator Aisha Wahab
Senator Scott D. Weiner
Matthew Fleming, Consultant
Janelle Miyashiro, Consultant

April 11, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
1021 O Street, Suite 6730
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support Letter SB 662 (Rubio) Universal Access to Court Records: Electronic Recording

Dear Chair Umberg:

The Legal Aid Association of California (LAAC) writes to express our strong support, along with the support of the undersigned organizations, for SB 662 (Rubio), a bill which we are proud to cosponsor. SB 662 will ensure due process to low-and moderate- income litigants disproportionately affected due to a lack of certified shorthand court reporters (CSRs). It will do so by providing an option for electronic recording—in the absence of an available court reporter—to produce a record of the proceeding. In addition, this bill will help build a workforce pipeline for CSRs by establishing a provisional certificate and creating a pathway for court reporters to enter into the field and court system.

LAAC is a statewide membership association of over 100 nonprofits that provide free civil legal services to low-income people and communities throughout California. LAAC member organizations provide legal assistance on a broad array of substantive issues, ranging from general poverty law to civil rights to immigration, and also serve a wide range of low-income and vulnerable populations. LAAC serves as California's unified voice for legal services and is a zealous advocate advancing the needs of the clients of legal services on a statewide level regarding funding and access to justice.

The California Supreme Court ruled in *Jameson v. Desta*¹ that all people have a right to a verbatim record of their proceeding. Right now, that right is being denied to thousands of Californians every day.

While the number of cases filed in California courts increases every year, the number of certified shorthand reporters in California has decreased by over 17% in the past decade.² Most shorthand

¹ "Accordingly, we conclude that . . . an official court reporter, or other valid means to create an official verbatim record for purposes of appeal, must generally be made available to in forma pauperis litigants upon request." 5 CAL.5TH 594, 599 (Cal. 2018).

² Department of Consumer Affairs: Data portal, www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml. The same data shows that new license applications have declined 67.2 in that same period, only 39 new licenses were issued in 2020–21, and the exam pass rate in California hovers around 25%. In addition, the average age of court reporters nationally was 55 as of June 30, 2022 (National Court Reporters Association, www.ncra.org/home/about-ncra/NCRA-Statistics).

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makes minimal use of electronic recording in state courts.⁸ There is no better evidence that electronic recording is a workable solution than that, where it is already allowed, it is utilized effectively and without major incident.

This bill's opponents argue that electronic recording is imperfect and court reporters have an incomparable advantage. We agree that a court reporter is preferable to an electronic recording but, ultimately, what matters most is not how the record produced, just that it is produced. In fact, we believe that a certified shorthand reporter is the gold standard in creating a verbatim record. However, an electronic recording being less desirable than a record taken by a court reporter does not mean that an electronic recording is unusable or that it jeopardizes the integrity of the court process in any way. Pointing out isolated examples of problems with electronic recording does not change that.

This bill's opponents argue that allowing electronic recording creates a two-tiered system with one standard for those who have and another for those who do not. But the status quo is already a two-tiered system and one that is infinitely more harmful. Right now, those who can afford to hire a court reporter get a record of their case, and those that cannot *get no record at all*. SB 662 will bring these two existing tiers closer together by providing a verbatim record for tens of thousands of people where none currently exists. By providing an electronic recording, at least all people will have a record of their case.

A lack of a verbatim record has a profoundly negative impact on court users.

A verbatim record of what happens at hearings is crucial to understanding what the judge has ordered and is essential to appeal the outcome of a proceeding. As the California Supreme Court wrote in *Jameson v. Desta* in 2018: “[T]he absence of a verbatim record of trial court proceedings will often have a devastating effect on a litigant’s ability to have an appeal of a trial court judgment decided on the merits.”⁹ The lack of a verbatim record also makes appealing a wrong or dangerous decision nearly impossible. For example, child custody and visitation orders should be modified when there is a change in circumstances that affects a child’s best interest, but a record is necessary to establish what the original circumstances were. This also comes at a tremendous burden and financial cost for missed work, childcare, transportation, etc. For domestic violence survivors of abuse, the emotional toll is also

⁸ NATIONAL COURT REPORTERS ASSOC., COURT REPORTING INDUSTRY OUTLOOK (2013–14), [https://www.ncra.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/education/schools/2013-14_ncra_industry_outlook-\(ducker\)8ef018c4b8ea486e9f8638864df79109.pdf?sfvrsn=c7a531e2_0](https://www.ncra.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/education/schools/2013-14_ncra_industry_outlook-(ducker)8ef018c4b8ea486e9f8638864df79109.pdf?sfvrsn=c7a531e2_0).

⁹ 5 CAL.5TH 594, 622 (Cal. 2018). See also COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA’S COURT SYSTEM, REPORT TO THE CHIEF JUSTICE 240 (2017) (“Providing an official record is essential to equal access, transparency, and fundamental fairness.”).

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significant and can be detrimental to their individual circumstance. Importantly, even when a court user does not seek to appeal, having a transcript helps them understand what happened during the case and what the result is.

This bill's opponents argue that before electronic recording is allowed, we should give the Legislatures financial investments time to play out. But it is unacceptable to continue to deny hundreds of thousands of people, most of them low-income and/or unrepresented, their right to a verbatim record while we wait. SB 662 offers a solution to prevent irreparable harm while we continue to work toward better CSR availability.

SB 662 is uniquely positioned to be successful because of its two-pronged approach: it addresses the problem both by increasing the supply of court reporters available AND by providing a solution for the thousands of people not currently getting any record of their case.

This bill's opponents argue that it will eliminate court reporter jobs. But the bill's unique approach will do precisely the opposite. There is no logical basis to assume that allowing electronic recording, only when there is no other option, will lead to a loss of court reporter jobs. In fact, this bill will force courts to hire more reporters and lessen the need for electronic recording.

Unlike any previous bill that attempted to repeal the statutory prohibition on electronic recording, SB 662 goes much further. In an effort to help people in need, while also supporting the CSR community, SB 662 makes specific efforts to increase the supply of CSRs in courts. Not only does it create a provisional licensing program so that more CSRs will be available for courts to hire, it also creates accountability for courts in their recruitment and hiring practices. For the first time in the many years that the legislature has allocated millions of dollars to courts to hire court reporters, SB 662 would require courts to report back to the legislature on how that money is or isn't being spent, increasing transparency.

Again, we agree that the ideal situation is to have a certified shorthand reporter in every proceeding. That is why this bill takes important steps to increase the supply of reporters in courts. **But, until those impacts can be felt, something must be done to protect the people that are currently suffering the abridgement of their ability to use the court system by failing to give them what they need to appeal as well as understand the outcome of their case.**

LAAC has been involved in advocacy around this topic for several years, from *Jameson* to now. It is an important issue to us, and we see SB 662 as the solution we have been looking for to ensure universal access to a record. SB 662 is a critical measure that will ensure individuals and families receive due

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process and access to justice. We respectfully ask for your "AYE" vote when this bill comes before your committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorin Kline".

Lorin Kline, Director of Advocacy

Jeffrey Webb
Bet Tzedek

Maura Gibney
California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform

Monique Berlanga
Centro Legal de la Raza

Kate Marr
Community Legal Aid SoCal

Melissa Brown
Community Legal Services, McGeorge School of Law

Eric Harris
Disability Rights California

Claudia Center
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund

Brooke Weitzman
Elder Law and Disability Rights Center

Teddy Basham-Witherington
Impact Fund

Mahdi Manji
Inner City Law Center

Stephanie Davidson
Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles

Josh Sullivan
Legal Aid of Marin

Gregory E. Knoll, Esq.
Legal Aid Society of San Diego

Thomas Drohan
Legal Assistance to the Elderly

Skyler Rosellini
National Health Law Program

Minyong Lee
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County

Leigh Ferrin
OneJustice

Betsy Butler
The California Women's Law Center

Tina Rosales
Western Center on Law and Poverty

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CC: Honorable Members, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Scott Wilk
Senator Benjamin Allen
Senator Angelique V. Ashby
Senator Anna M. Caballero
Senator María Elena Durazo
Senator John Laird
Senator Dave Min
Senator Roger W. Niello
Senator Henry I. Stern
Senator Scott D. Wiener
Allison Whitt Meredith, Staff Counsel

Legislative Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse
El Dorado Hills, California 95762

Jan 11, 2024

Honorable Anthony Portantino
Senate Appropriations Committee
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 662 (Rubio) Access to Court Records

Honorable Chairman Portantino,

I write as director of the Legislative Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse to express our organization's support of SB 662. This bill will improve access to court recordings in cases involving family violence. We work with cases where children have been left unprotected from abuse or murder in custody proceedings. Court reporters are not required to be at all hearings that pertain to child safety. However, a record of what occurs at these hearings is essential if children and families are to be protected. The bill is sponsored by the Family Violence Appellate Project. They have expertise in the area of domestic violence and court proceedings and have worked with stakeholders to craft this needed solution.

The lack of a reporter's transcript makes it impossible to appeal cases where the court has overlooked extensive evidence of severe danger to children. Lower court rulings could not be appealed in many cases that have resulted in predictable and preventable homicides after family members begged the courts for protection. SB 662 will be one step toward better protection for children.

Importantly, this bill would require the Judicial Council to collect information from courts and report to the legislature regarding how they are utilizing funds appropriated to recruit and hire court reporters.

SB 662 promotes child and family safety, equity, proper case management and court accountability. We ask for your aye vote.

On behalf of the Coalition,

Melissa Knight-Fine
Legislative Coalition to Prevent Child Abuse
melissaknightfine@yahoo.com
916-203-1234

January 8, 2024

Via Electronic Submission Only

Senate Appropriations Committee

Link: <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates/>

Re: Letter of Support for SB 662 (Sen. Rubio)

Dear Senator Atkins, Senator Portantino, and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

I write to urge your support for SB 662 to address the certified shorthand reporter (CSR) crisis that is impacting California trial courts, authored by Senator Susan Rubio. By expanding the courts' ability to implement electronic recording of court hearings in civil cases where a CSR is unavailable, the bill will help ensure access to justice for all California citizens who are involved in civil litigation.

As a lawyer, I understand the importance of having a transcript of court proceedings. It enables my clients to sufficiently request reconsideration of a trial court ruling, to request immediate review of a trial court decision to a court of appeal, or to appeal certain decisions or the judgment entered in the case. Without a record of court hearings, there is a much lower chance of having a trial court decision reviewed or reversed.

I have observed the shortage of CSRs. It has driven up the cost of having a court reporter present for civil case court hearings and depositions, which unfortunately impacts my clients by making civil lawsuits more expensive. I have observed difficulties with reserving a court reporter for court hearings in my complex, civil cases due to the shortage. I have also conducted depositions with an electronic recorder, then engaged the court reporter business to transcribe the recording with no issues.

As Californians, we have to embrace facts and make provisions for the future. Especially so, where the issue impacts civil justice and the third branch of government.

- Fact: there is a shortage of CSRs that is not going to be *fully* remedied through court recruitment efforts.
- Fact: There are civil litigants, including family law litigants and domestic violence survivors, who need court hearing transcripts to request review of trial court decisions and judgments rendered in their cases, to ensure civil justice. Ensuring that a court hearing may be electronically recorded in all civil cases, where a CSR is unavailable, is a step in the right direction. It helps to ensure that all litigants have equal access to justice.

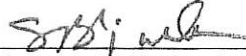
- Fact: Electronic recordings of depositions in civil cases are already taking place in California. So, too, are electronic recordings of certain court hearings in both LA County Superior Courts and in certain United States District Courts in the Central District of California, as permitted by law. All to good use and effect.
- Fact: Jobs are created by permitting qualified individuals to set up and oversee the electronic recorders, and to transcribe the electronic recordings when requested.

In truth, SB 662 simply expands the categories of civil case types where electronic recordings are permitted, where CSRs are not available. CSRs will retain the right of first refusal for transcription of electronic recordings. It also provides a mechanism to help the California Legislature evaluate the need for requiring new applicants who have already passed other certification exams to pass the California exam. Civil litigants who can afford to, or prefer to, use a CSR will retain the right to do so in depositions and at court hearings.

Please strongly consider taking SB 662 out of “suspense” this month and permitting the bill to move forward towards passage. Thank you.

Sincerely,

BOUCHER LLP

By: 

Shehnaz M. Bhujwala, Esq. (Bio)



Mothers of Lost Children

January 8, 2024

The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol Building Room 412
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: SB 662 (Rubio) Court Record SUPPORT

Dear Senator Portantino:

Mothers of Lost Children are a group of mothers whose children are forced to visit unsupervised or live with their identified perpetrators through failures in the family and juvenile courts. Our children have disclosed abuse, and have not been protected or believed. The agencies designed to protect children have not helped, and in many cases have done harm. We have done everything we, as individuals, could do to protect them, yet have been unable to keep them safe.

We are writing in strong SUPPORT of SB 662 Court Record bill by Senator Susan Rubio. It is a common sense response to a crisis in our courts. A national survey by Geraldine Stahly PhD found that over half (57%) of California family courts hearings were held without court reporters.

The lack of court reporters in California courts affects the safety and rights of survivors of domestic violence who rely on the court for critical orders to protect them and their families including restraining orders, child custody and visitation orders, spousal and child support orders, orders declaring debt was caused by domestic abuse, and many others. **Court reporters are not required to be at**

these hearings. However, a record of what happens at these hearings is necessary to have orders enforced by law enforcement and the courts, to challenge wrong or dangerous orders, and because these cases often last years in the courts.

There are not enough court reporters to cover all the courts. Litigants must pay high prices for a live court reporter which creates a two-tiered justice system. Rich people get the gold standard of live court reporters. The rest of the litigants do not even get a record of their hearing. Electronic recording works. It is being used in evictions, small claims, criminal misdemeanors, and infractions cases. The technology is there and justice demands we use it. We also need to hold courts accountable to recruit, hire and retain court reporters. SB 662 does both. **We urge you to approve SB 662, a critical bill to ensure justice for all.**

Sincerely,
Sarah Kerlow, President

2513 Tamarisk Dr. Santa Rosa, CA 95405
<https://www.mothersoflostchildrenmovement.org>



The nation's largest pro bono law firm

January 14, 2024

Via Email and Position Letter Portal

The Honorable Anthony Portantino, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
California State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 662 (Rubio), Universal Access to Court Records – Support

Dear Senator Portantino:

I am writing on behalf of the Consumer Rights and Economic Justice (CREJ) project at Public Counsel to express our strong support for Senate Bill 662, authored by Senator Rubio. The bill seeks to address the critical shortage of court reporters in our judicial system.

CREJ represents and assists low-income individuals facing debt-collection lawsuits, and involved in other consumer litigation. Many, if not most, of our clients qualify for fee waivers, which entitle them to court-appointed official court reporters.

Our experience – and the experiences of the *pro per* litigants whom we assist – have repeatedly highlighted the detrimental impact of the current shortage of court reporters. This scarcity has created a two-tier justice system, depriving of equal justice those who cannot afford live private court reporters.

We have witnessed firsthand how this situation has infringed upon the legal rights and fair trial opportunities of our clients. For example, we are often constrained in assisting individuals when they come to us for help after having proceeded in hearings and trials without a court reporter. The lack of a verbatim record limits their options, particularly in appeals or subsequent legal actions. In contrast, where electronic reporting has been available, the records enable us to thoroughly evaluate our clients' cases and more effectively guide them through their legal options.

Electronic recording, as proposed in SB 662, is a viable and necessary solution. It is already effectively used in various judicial proceedings, such as evictions, small claims, and misdemeanors. Implementing electronic recording in all civil cases will ensure a more equitable

January 14, 2024

Page 2

justice system, where access to accurate records is not a privilege of the wealthy but a standard for all.

Moreover, SB 662's provisions to encourage the hiring and retention of court reporters are crucial. The bill's requirement for the Judicial Council to report annually on its efforts towards this goal ensures accountability and progress in addressing this crisis.

SB 662 represents a balanced approach to a pressing issue, ensuring both technological adaptation and the continued importance of court reporters in our legal system. We urge your support for SB 662 so that we can move towards a more just and equitable legal system for all Californians.

Sincerely,

Ghirlandi C. Guidetti

Ghirlandi Guidetti

Staff Attorney

Consumer Rights and Economic Justice

Via Email only to: Office of Gov. Gavin Newsom, Legislative Affairs (leg.unit@gov.ca.gov); Nick Hardeman, Chief of Staff (nick.hardeman@sen.ca.gov); Kimberly Rodriguez, Policy Director (kimberly.rodriguez@sen.ca.gov); Matthew Fleming, Consultant on Judiciary/Public Safety (Matthew.Fleming@sen.ca.gov); and Craig Wilson, Chief of Staff (craig.wilson@sen.ca.gov).



CONSUMER ATTORNEYS
OF CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA
DEFENSE
COUNSEL



April 11, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 3240
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SB 662 (Rubio): SUPPORT

Dear Senator Umberg:

Senate Bill 662 (Rubio) is scheduled for hearing in the Judiciary Committee on Tuesday, April 18, 2023. On behalf of the combined memberships of the Consumer Attorneys of California, the California Defense Counsel, and the California Judges Association, we are writing in support of the measure and to respectfully request your "AYE" vote.

SB 662 addresses a growing crisis in our court system relating to the unavailability of court reporters. The inability of courts to fill positions for Certified Shorthand Reporters literally represents a denial of due process and access to justice, particularly for low-income litigants without the resources to hire private court reporters to act as reporters pro Tem. In response to this growing problem, SB 662 proposes a multifaceted, balanced approach which authorizes the California Court Reporters Board to issue provisional licenses to reporters who have passed a national court reporters exam, and broadens the *existing authority* for courts to order electronic recording in limited jurisdiction civil cases to all civil cases. In order for courts to order electronic recording under the bill, the court must make every effort to hire a reporter for the proceeding, and offer a right of first refusal for existing court reporters to transcribe any proceeding recorded electronically.

Importantly, SB 662 also requires the California Judicial Council to adopt rules and standards for the use of electronic recording, to ensure that recordings are able to be easily transcribed, and to report to the Legislature about progress in hiring court reporters from previously approved budget funds.

Unfortunately, every reliable metric has shown that there is a large and growing shortage of licensed Certified Shorthand Reporters in California. It is indisputable that the numbers of licensed Certified Shorthand Reporters has been declining for years, with court reporting

schools closing, and a very small number of new admittees joining the profession. Court executives confirm that there are far more court reporters leaving their positions than they can replace. Individual courts are now offering very substantial signing bonuses and referral fees in an attempt to fill their depleted court reporter ranks. Practitioners have been hiring private court reporters for court proceedings for years as the courts could not provide them. Additionally, now in an attempt to cover criminal proceedings, where liberty interests are at stake, increasingly courts are not providing court reporters for additional civil proceedings, including family law where unrepresented litigants literally are at risk of losing custody of their children.

Because of the supply-demand imbalance, court reporter fees for court proceedings where court reporters are not provided are skyrocketing. Lawyers have reported paying thousands of dollars per day in “appearance fees.” A few years ago, a one day deposition might have cost \$600 - \$1,000. Now \$5,000 a day is not uncommon. This is simply not affordable for all but the wealthiest. Worse, practitioners report that increasingly court proceedings are being postponed due to the lack of Certified Shorthand Reporters.

Please be assured that our concerns do not arise from any hostility to court reporters. To the contrary, Certified Shorthand Reporters play a critical role in the judicial system. Court reporting is a difficult, arduous and intense activity requiring great skill. We have enormous respect for individuals who can create a verbatim record of contentious and often emotional proceedings, with lawyers and parties talking over each other, frequently involving interpreters and non-English speaking witnesses, objections and the specialized language of the law.

Simply put, it is past time for the Legislature to address the growing unavailability and unaffordability of court reporters. Because due process and access to justice issues are at stake, we would again express support for the balanced approach in SB 662 and respectfully request your “AYE” vote.

Sincerely,

Greg Rizio

Greg Rizio, President
Consumer Attorneys of California

John Cotter

John Cotter, President
California Defense Counsel

David Rosenberg

The Honorable David Rosenberg
President, California Judges Association

cc: The Honorable Susan Rubio
Members, Senate Judiciary Committee
Allison Meredith, Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
Morgan Branch, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus

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Via Email and US Mail

January 12, 2024

The Honorable Toni G. Atkins
California State Senate President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony J. Portantino
California Senate Appropriations
Committee State Capitol, Room 412
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support for SB 662 (Rubio)

Dear Senators Atkins and Portantino and Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee:

I write on behalf of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA) to express our strong support for Senate Bill 662, authored by Senator Susan Rubio, which aims to address the crisis in our California superior courts, resulting from the inability to provide a court record for those least able to afford one.

There is an increasing shortage of Certified Shorthand Reporters (CSRs) available to create a record of court proceedings and the problem is only getting worse. This hurts your constituents who are unable to obtain a transcript of their proceedings, because that record is often necessary to protect their rights on extremely significant personal and family matters as described below.

In combination with measures being taken by the superior courts to retain and recruit CSRs, SB 662 is necessary to address the constitutional crisis caused by the fact that tens of thousands of Californians each month are currently deprived of the possibility of meaningful access to justice as a result of the lack of a verbatim record of proceedings.

As a result of the severe court reporter shortage and statutory restrictions on electronic recording, over 300,000 hearings took place this past year alone in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County without a court reporter, leaving litigants without access to a verbatim record of these proceedings.

Court Reporter recruitment and retention incentives first announced in February, and increased in September, were generous, but barely enabled the Los Angeles Superior Court to maintain its current CSR staffing. Since the LA Court announced a recruitment and incentive package in February, 18 court reporters have left court



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JANET HONG

service and 11 court reporters have joined court service (including one voice writer), resulting in a net loss of 7 court reporters.

This increasing number of uncovered hearings and the decreasing number of CSRs heavily impacts low- and moderate- income litigants who cannot afford the very high costs of obtaining a court reporter, when their ranks are shrinking.

Important rights relating to family law matters — including custody, visitation, relocation, and protection of children, protection of victims of domestic violence, rights to alimony, and other matters — are being adjudicated without a transcript. This hurts the parties' ability to enforce or appeal the court's decisions.


Similarly, important other civil matters relating to probate and resolution of important civil disputes are being adjudicated without any transcript of proceedings.

The need for SB 662 is urgent. The potential costs of implementing the bill — in comparison to the deprivation of rights currently experienced by those served by our courts who cannot afford court reporters — are minimal. This is especially so where many courtrooms already have the means to electronically record court proceedings, and funds exist to further equip courtrooms with the means to electronically record court proceedings.

Accordingly, WLALA urges that you pass SB 662 from the Appropriations Committee, and use your considerable influence to bring competing views together to reach an effective solution for the severe shortage of CSRs and the serious impact on constituents who need to use the court system.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeannine Taylor". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Jeannine Y. Taylor
President, Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles



Judicial Council of California

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PATRICIA GUERRERO
Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council

SHELLEY CURRAN
Administrative Director

January 8, 2024

Hon. Anthony Portantino, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 7630
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Senate Bill 662 (Rubio), as amended April 27, 2023 – Support

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Judicial Council supports SB 662, which permits a court to electronically record any civil case if an official reporter or an official reporter pro tempore is unavailable, as specified. The bill requires that the court make every effort to hire a court reporter before electing to electronically record the action or proceedings pursuant to these provisions. It requires a court to provide a certified shorthand reporter, as specified, the right of first refusal to transcribe an electronically reported proceeding.

In addition, the bill requires the Court Reporters Board to review its licensing examination to determine whether it is necessary to require applicants who have passed the National Court Reporters Association's or the National Verbatim Reporters Association's certification examination, to demonstrate competency as a certified shorthand reporter. The bill requires the Board to evaluate whether the California-specific examination should be replaced with acceptance of the National Court Reporter's Association's or the National Verbatim Reporter's Association's certification examination to establish proficiency in machine shorthand reporting or voice writing. It requires the Board to submit its findings to the Legislature by June 1, 2024, during its regular Joint Sunset Review Oversight Hearings.

Finally, the bill requires the Judicial Council to collect information from courts regarding how they are utilizing funds appropriated to recruit and hire court reporters. It requires, beginning January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter until all such funds are expended, the Council to report to the Legislature the efforts courts have taken to hire and retain court reporters and how the funds appropriated for this purpose have been spent.

In expanding electronic reporting to all civil case types, SB 662 is consistent with the Council's adopted 2023 Legislative Priorities that include "Continu[ing] to promote the availability of verbatim records of court proceedings by working collaboratively to address court reporter shortages and exploring innovations in technology."

Due to the well documented court reporter shortage, the prohibitive cost of hiring a private court reporter, and existing statutory restrictions on the use of electronic reporting, many parties today lack access to a verbatim record.¹

The California Supreme Court, in a 2018 opinion, stated that "the absence of a verbatim record of trial court proceedings will often have a devastating effect" on a litigant's ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.² Without an accurate and complete transcript, these parties are for all practical purposes unable to meaningfully exercise their right to appeal. Removing the statutory case type restrictions and expanding the use of electronic reporting, which increases access to a verbatim record, promotes access to justice.

Next, SB 662 demonstrates a clear policy preference for court reporters by explicitly requiring that courts make every effort to hire a court reporter before permitting electronic recording. The bill also provides a right of first refusal to certified shorthand reporters if a transcript of an electronic recording is requested. Notably, under SB 662, these requirements would apply to both the civil cases added by the bill as well as existing case types in which electronic recording is already currently authorized.³

SB 662 also takes steps to address the court reporter shortage by requiring the Court Reporters Board to review its licensing requirements. It is hoped that this will help ease the critical shortage by expanding the pool of court reporters.

Finally, the bill requires the Council to track and report to the Legislature on funds appropriated to recruit and hire court reporters. This reporting requirement is similar to other reporting requirements already in statute. Because the Council is already tracking the purchase and lease of ER equipment by trial courts and providing semiannual reports to the Legislature pursuant to section 69958 of the Government Code, it is anticipated that the bill's reporting requirement would not be unreasonably burdensome.

¹ *Fact Sheet: Shortage of Certified Shorthand Reporters in California*, Judicial Council of California, January 2024. There were 4,752 California-licensed court reporters residing in the state as of July 1, 2023. However, according to the California Department of Consumer Affairs [data portal](#), between FY 2013–14 and FY 2021–22, the number of total licensees has declined 19.2 percent and the number of new license applications has declined 70.1 percent. Just 35 new licenses were issued statewide in 2021–22.

² *Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, 622.

³ Electronic recording is currently authorized in limited civil, misdemeanor, and infraction proceedings when a court reporter is unavailable (Gov. Code, § 69957(a)).

During July–September 2023 alone, an estimated 133,000 family, probate, and unlimited civil hearings were held in California with no verbatim record. This represents 38.8 percent of reported hearings in these case types. An additional 81,900 hearings in these case types had no court-provided reporter and it is unknown whether a verbatim record was captured by a private court reporter, representing 23.9 percent of reported hearings in these case types.

Certified Shorthand Reporters are the preferred way to provide a record; however, the number of court reporters is not keeping pace with the need. This threatens access to justice for all Californians, especially those who cannot afford to pay thousands of dollars for their own private court reporter when the court does not have enough court reporters to staff civil courtrooms.

As noted in *Jameson*, the lack of a verbatim record will “frequently be fatal” to a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.⁴ Victims seeking protective orders, such as victims of domestic violence or elder abuse, may have difficulty appealing the denial of a protective order because they don’t have a record. In civil matters, an appellate court may be unable to review a party’s claim of error in the trial court. In criminal proceedings, the lack of a sufficient record may impact a defendant’s constitutional rights of due process and equal protection.⁵

For these reasons, the Judicial Council supports SB 662.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Aviva Simon at 916-323-3121.

Sincerely,



Cory T. Jasperson
Director
Governmental Affairs

CTJ/AS/emu
Attachment

cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
Hon. Susan Rubio, Member of the Senate, 22nd District
Ms. Christy Bouma, Legislative Affairs Secretary, Office of the Governor
Ms. Shelley Curran, Administrative Director, Judicial Council of California

⁴ *Jameson*, *supra*, 5 Cal.5th at 608, fn. 1.

⁵ *In re Armstrong* (1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 565; *March v. Mun. Ct.* (1972) 7 Cal.3d 422.

Fact Sheet: Shortage of Certified Shorthand Reporters in California

January 2024



Background

The California Supreme Court, in a 2018 opinion, stated that “the absence of a verbatim record of trial court proceedings will often have a devastating effect” on a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.¹ The verbatim record is captured and transcribed exclusively by certified shorthand reporters (court reporters) in case types where a court reporter is required² and electronic recording is not authorized.³ Parties may arrange for the services of a court reporter in other case types.⁴ However, a declining number of court reporters threatens access to justice for court users, especially Californians who can’t afford to pay for their own court reporter.

Number of Court-Employed Reporters Falls Short of Need

According to the fiscal year (FY) 2022–23 Schedule 7A, courts employ approximately 1,200 FTE (full-time equivalent) court reporters. To meet minimum requirements,⁵ it is estimated that California courts may need up to an additional 650 full-time court reporters.⁶ In addition to court reporters employed by the courts, courts also contract with pro tempore⁷ reporters to help meet the need.

California trial courts reported in recent surveys that between January 1 and September 30, 2023:

- 43 of the 58 courts actively recruited for court reporters;
- 69.3 (FTE) court reporters were hired, 16.5 (FTE) of whom came from other courts (23.8% of all hires); and
- 84.1 (FTE) court reporters have left employment at the courts, for a net loss of 14.8 (FTE) reporters.⁸

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

California courts are challenged to recruit and retain court reporters to meet the needs of court users and legal requirements. These challenges include an ever-decreasing number of California-licensed court reporters and difficulty competing with private employers in the labor market.

Declining availability of California-licensed court reporters

There were 4,752 California-licensed court reporters residing in the state as of July 1, 2023.⁹ However, according to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, between FY 2013–14 and FY 2021–22 the total number of licensees declined 19.2% and the number of new license applications declined 70.1%.¹⁰ Potential indicators that the decline will continue include:

- *Challenging pathway to licensure:* Thirty-five new licenses were issued statewide in 2021–22.^{11,12} Of the 271 individuals who applied to take the skills (dictation) portion of the past three California certified shorthand reporter exams (held Nov. 2022, Mar. 2023, and July 2023), 31.7% passed. The November 2022 exam was the first to include voice writing; a total of 17 individuals have since passed the skills exam as voice writers.¹³

¹ *Jameson v. Desta* (2018) 5 Cal.5th 594, 622.

² Felony and juvenile cases.

³ Electronic recording is not authorized except in limited civil, misdemeanor, and infraction proceedings when a court reporter is unavailable (Gov. Code, § 69957(a)).

⁴ Courts must also provide an official court reporter in civil cases when a party with a fee waiver requests one, and the proceeding can not otherwise be electronically recorded.

⁵ Covering all case types where a court reporter is required or electronic recording is not authorized.

⁶ “Need” is calculated by applying the Resource Assessment Study estimate of court reporter need of 1.25 times the assessed judicial need for each included case type, www.courts.ca.gov/29305.htm.

⁷ Refers to an individual who is retained by the court on an intermittent or contractual basis.

⁸ Court Reporter Recruitment, Retention, and Attrition dashboard, www.courts.ca.gov/76328.htm.

⁹ Court Reporters Board: December 13, 2023, Board Meeting Packet, www.courtreportersboard.ca.gov/about-us/20231213_packet.pdf.

¹⁰ Department of Consumer Affairs data portal, www.dca.ca.gov/data/annual_license_stats.shtml.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Only eight court reporting programs recognized by the state remain open (down from 17 schools in 2010), www.courtreportersboard.ca.gov/applicants/school_info.shtml. However, students may also qualify for California’s Certified Shorthand Reporter exam by obtaining national certification demonstrating proficiency in machine shorthand reporting or voice writing.

¹³ Court Reporters Board: School Examination Statistics, www.courtreportersboard.ca.gov/applicants/examstats.shtml.

Fact Sheet: Shortage of Certified Shorthand Reporters in California

January 2024



- *Court reporters likely nearing retirement:* The National Court Reporters Association reported the average age of its court reporter members to be approximately 55 as of December 31, 2022.¹⁴ In California, approximately 44.9% of all active licenses were issued at least 30 years ago.¹⁵

Compensation

Court reporters in California courts are paid, on average, 51% more than other nonmanager court positions. At the same time, the declining number of court reporters in California has created a tight and competitive labor market, exacerbating compensation pressures. According to the FY 2022–23 Schedule 7A, court-employed reporters' median total salary plus benefits is estimated to be \$183,940.¹⁶ This is significantly lower than the cost to hire a court reporter through a private company: \$2,580/day for a deposition and \$3,300/day for a trial, on average.¹⁷ Additionally, transcripts must be purchased from court reporters. In 2021, the Legislature increased the statutory transcript fees by approximately 30%.¹⁸ In FY 2022–23, California courts spent \$22.6 million on transcripts.¹⁹

Current Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Trial courts are implementing a variety of incentives to recruit and retain court reporters. Between July 1 and September 30, 2023, approximately 82.9% of trial courts that are actively recruiting utilized at least one incentive to recruit and retain court reporters. These incentives included signing bonuses (63.4% of actively recruiting courts offered signing bonuses), retention and longevity bonuses (39.0%), increased salary ranges (41.5%), finder's fees (39.0%), student loan or tuition reimbursement incentives (29.3%), and more.²⁰ For example, the Los Angeles court is offering a \$50,000 signing bonus and \$25,000 finder's fee for court employees who refer a court reporter, Riverside offered up to \$32,500 in retention payments over three years, and Contra Costa provides a \$50,000 tuition reimbursement fund for existing court employees to use toward pursuing court reporter certification.

Importance of the Verbatim Record

Between July 1 and September 30, 2023, of 343,200 family, probate, and unlimited civil hearings in California, an estimated 133,000 hearings had no verbatim record (38.8% of reported hearings), and an additional estimated 81,900 hearings (23.9%) had no court-provided reporter and it is unknown whether a verbatim record was captured by a private court reporter.²¹ The lack of a verbatim record will "frequently be fatal" to a litigant's ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.²² For example, victims seeking protective orders, such as victims of domestic violence or elder abuse, may have difficulty appealing the denial of a protective order because they don't have a record. In civil matters, an appellate court may be unable to review a party's claim of error in the trial court. In criminal proceedings, the lack of a sufficient record may impact a defendant's constitutional rights of due process and equal protection.²³ California appellate courts have also ordered new criminal proceedings where a reporter's notes were destroyed or lost, there were substantial issues on appeal, and there was no adequate substitute for the notes.²⁴

¹⁴ National Court Reporters Association, www.ncra.org/home/about-ncra/NCRA-Statistics.

¹⁵ Department of Consumer Affairs, Licensee List (as of Nov. 2023), www.dca.ca.gov/consumers/public_info/index.shtml.

¹⁶ Median value of estimated salary and benefit costs statewide by the filled court reporter FTEs.

¹⁷ Data provided by a survey of 49 private consumer attorneys. It is unknown how much of the court reporter rate charged by companies is provided to the reporter in the form of compensation and how much is kept by the company.

¹⁸ *Sen. Bill 170 (Stats. 2021, ch. 240)*.

¹⁹ 2022–23 Schedule 7A total court statewide transcript expenditures, excluding Electronic Recording.

²⁰ Court Reporter Recruitment, Retention, and Attrition dashboard, www.courts.ca.gov/76328.htm.

²¹ Courts were asked to provide the number of hearings without a verbatim record and the number of total hearings for each of these case types or in the aggregate. Where a court provided the number of hearings without a verbatim record for a case type but not the corresponding total hearings (or vice versa), that case type data was removed from the data set.

²² *Jamerson*, *supra*, 5 Cal.5th at 608, fn. 1.

²³ *In re Armstrong* (1981) 126 Cal.App.3d 565; *March v. Municipal Court* (1972) 7 Cal.3d 422.

²⁴ *People v. Jones* (1981) 125 Cal.App.3d 298; *People v. Apalatequi* (1978) 82 Cal.App.3d 970; see Pen. Code, § 1181(9).



Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc.

PO BOX 2488, VALLEY CENTER, CA 92082-2488 ♦ Phone: 760-644-4781

Web: www.strongheartednativewomen.org ♦ Facebook: www.facebook.com/SHNWCInc

April 27, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Umberg
Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
1021 O Street, Suite 6730
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Support for SB 662 (Rubio) Universal Access to Court Records

Honorable Senator Umberg,

Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc. writes in enthusiastic support of SB 662. As an organization that supports survivors of domestic violence, we know the importance of a verbatim record of court proceedings. Our clients rely on the court for critical orders to protect them and their families including restraining orders, child custody and visitation orders, spousal and child support orders, orders declaring debt was caused by domestic abuse, and many others. Court reporters are not required to be at these hearings. However, a record of what happens at these hearings is necessary for many important reasons.

First, there is a particular need for a reporter's transcript in family law proceedings involving domestic violence issues because law enforcement officers are often called upon to enforce domestic violence restraining orders, or child custody and visitation orders that address family violence issues. In these cases, transcripts are needed to craft an accurate post-hearing written order that can be enforced by law enforcement officers.

Second, in custody and visitation cases where the issues are litigated and revisited over many years, transcripts are needed for the court to assess whether there have been significant changed circumstances since the initial determination. Having the transcript from the initial custody or visitation determination provides the court with a factual baseline of the parties' previous behavior to help the judge assess whether alterations to custody or visitation schedules are warranted.

Third, in many California counties, judges serve only one or two years in family court before moving on to another courtroom assignment. As a result, domestic violence survivors are assigned to multiple judges if the case spans more than one or two years, which happens frequently as parents request revisions to custody and visitation determinations over time. Without a transcript detailing the precise basis for the original order, the new family law judge is at a disadvantage in assessing and handling the case.

Fourth, the lack of a reporter's transcript is a particularly severe problem for appeals in family violence cases where the volume of family law and domestic violence cases means that written opinions are the exception, not the rule. As a result, it is nearly impossible to appeal wrong or dangerous decisions since a party may not raise evidentiary issues, or other issues dependent on trial court proceedings or rulings not included in a written order, unless there is a reporter's transcript. (See *Jameson v. Desta* (2015) 241 Cal.App.4th 491, 504 [holding that because "the record on appeal does not contain a reporter's transcript," Jameson was "precluded from obtaining a reversal of the trial court's ruling granting Desta's motion for nonsuit"]; *Foust v. San Jose Construction Co.* (2011) 198 Cal.App.4th 181, 185-186) ["In numerous situations, appellate courts have refused to reach the merits of an appellant's claims because no reporter's transcript of a pertinent proceeding or a suitable substitute was provided."])

Since 2015 people who qualify for a fee waiver have had the right to request a free court reporter. However, in our county, the court often has to continue our clients cases for weeks or months before a court reporter is available. Preparing to go to court repeatedly is traumatic to our clients and stretches our agency resources unnecessarily. We believe this bill will ensure our clients are able to access safety and justice in a timely manner which is very important.

For these reasons, Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc. strongly supports SB 662 and thanks you for authoring this important bill.

Sincerely,



Keely Linton

Executive Director

Strong Hearted Native Women's Coalition, Inc.

cc: Family Violence Appellate Project, sponsor (info@fvapl.org)



MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO JUSTICE: PROTECTING A LITIGANT'S EQUAL ACCESS TO THE RECORD

- Access to justice means having a record of the court proceedings. A **transcript is fundamental to our system of justice.**
- Every year, appellate courts evaluate and sometimes overturn trial court decisions. Appellate courts exist to correct legal errors, but without an official record of the previous proceedings, there can be no justice.
- As a result of the ongoing court reporter staffing shortage crisis, **courts are unable to provide reporters in all case types**, including family law, probate and civil matters. Litigants in these case types have no transcript of significant decisions being made impacting their lives. In 2023 **over 300,000 hearings took place in Los Angeles County without any transcript**, rendering review on appeal impossible. These hearings involve some of the most critical and life-altering legal issues, such as divorce, child custody and domestic violence.
- Despite spending millions to recruit and retain official court reporters, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County continues to experience a vacancy rate of over 100 court reporters.
- But there is an answer: **SB 662**, filed by Senator Susan Rubio, would expand the use of electronic recording, which is already permitted and used in some case types with little or no issues. In fact, our Appellate Division handles over 500 matters per year using electronic transcripts without complaint.
- **This is a constitutional crisis. To achieve equal justice, SB 662 must be passed to expand electronic recording to provide fair and equal justice for all.**

QUICK FACTS

WHY ARE TRANSCRIPTS IMPORTANT?

As the California Supreme Court has explained, the lack of a verbatim record will “frequently be fatal” to a litigant’s ability to have an appeal decided on the merits.¹ A parent needing appellate review of a family law judge’s custody decision may be denied review all together for lack of a transcript. A domestic violence survivor may have difficulty obtaining an enforceable protective order without a transcript. An employee suing for wrongful termination may be denied an appeal of the matter due to lacking a transcript.

WHERE ARE ALL THE COURT REPORTERS?

Fewer than 32% of aspiring court reporters passed the three most recent certification exams. Only 35 new official court reporters entered the workforce in FY 2021/22 to cover the entire state of California. The average age of current court reporters is 55 years old.

WHY CAN'T COURTS RECRUIT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR?

Private-sector court reporters earn \$3,300/day – over \$850,000 annually, on average. Compare that to the median court-employed reporter salary + benefits of \$183,940 plus income from selling transcripts.





THE COURT'S \$10M+ CAMPAIGN TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN COURT REPORTERS IS NOT WORKING

February 2023: Presiding Judge Samantha P. Jessner and Executive Officer/Clerk of Court David W. Slayton announce plans to use nearly \$10 million in state funding to address a court reporter staffing shortage.

September 2023: The Court doubles down on its efforts, describing the court reporter shortage as a "constitutional crisis" and announcing substantially increased recruitment/retainment bonuses, including:

- \$50,000 signing bonus over 2 years; generous school student loan and equipment allowances for court reporter schools; \$5-\$10,000 in retention bonuses; \$25,000 finder's fee for court employees who bring court reporters to the court; 5% floater bonus per pay period and more.
- High-profile recruitment ads in *LA Times*, *USA Today*, plus bus ads and billboards across LA County.

These abundant outlays of cash have barely allowed the Court to maintain its current CSR staffing. Since the Court announced its robust recruitment and incentives in February 2023...

- 18 court reporters have left court service
- 11 court reporters have joined court service, resulting in a
- Net loss of 7 court reporters (as of December 31, 2023)

RECENT MEDIA COVERAGE ON THE COURT REPORTER SHORTAGE

San Francisco Public Press, November 14, 2023

"California's Court Reporter Shortage Limits Access to Justice in Domestic Violence Cases"

Bloomberg Law, September 22, 2023

"Break the Law or Leave No Record, California Courts Face Dilemma"

LAist, September 14, 2023

"Court Reporters are Crucial Part of the Justice System. Here's How a Shortage is Impacting LA County"

Los Angeles Times, July 27, 2023

"Extensive staffing crisis at L.A. County courts puts vulnerable defendants in dire straits"

