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## California's Judicial Council Welcomes New Members Before Hearing Tumult

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SAN FRANCISCO (CN) -- A big group of new faces sat around the table at Monday's Judicial Council meeting as 10 new members took their places on the 28-member council that decides statewide court rules and sets the courts' legislative agenda.

The meeting was also the first for Martin Hoshino, who was named to replace retiring Judge Steve Jahr as the Judicial Council's staff director last month. Hoshino, who left his job as operations undersecretary at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, hinted Monday that sweeping changes are ahead for the Judicial Council's administrative arm.

He said most of the time since he started working for the courts has been spent "doing section by section reviews of all the divisions in operation here amongst the council staff," and that he has personally met with every member of the staff in San Francisco, Sacramento and Burbank.

"I hope they feel as good about me as I feel about them a year from now, after I've had the luxury of making some zero-sum decisions that affect their workplace and their lives," he said.

Hoshino also said he plans to visit as many of the 58 county courts in California as possible, "so I can walk in their shoes."

Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye, who also chairs the council, swore in: Judge Marla Anderson of Monterey County, Judge Brian Back of Ventura County, Judge Martin Tangeman of San Luis Obispo County, Judge Daniel Buckley of Los Angeles, Commissioner David Gunn of Butte County, Judge Joan Weber of San Diego and Presiding Judge Dean Stout of Inyo County to new Judicial Council terms.

Two new attorneys Donna D'Angelo Melby, Debra Pole, and one court clerk, Richard Feldstein of Napa County, also took the oath.

Cantil-Sakauye then announced that it was the last council meeting for Sen. Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa), who recently said she would not seek re-election.

The celebratory formalities took place in an unusually crowded chamber, and were followed by a tumultuous round of public comment on family court policies in California that included roughly 30 litigants, attorneys and private citizens urging a separate hearing to address allegations of abuse in the state's family courts.

The public viewing area of the council's meeting chambers was packed with people in red t-shirts, representing by far the largest crowd since the council expanded its public comment period in 2011.

Nearly every speaker who stepped up to the podium remarked that the one minute each of them had been allotted was not nearly adequate.

The speakers came from all over the state, from San Diego to Placer county.

Most complained of family law judges' custody decisions, saying the judges were not listening children's allegations of physical and sexual abuse and awarding custody to their abusers.

"Children are being killed in California. And many times, the courts are missing what's going on," Kathleen Russell, executive director of the non-profit Center for Judicial Excellence told the council. "We graciously request a public hearing on this issue. The family courts are forcing children into custody with abusers."

Family law attorney Barbara Kauffman complained that Marin County Superior Court, under the direction of Court Executive Officer Kim Turner, had destroyed child custody case files and had backdated court records in 2009 when the court was facing an investigation by the Bureau of State Audits.

Courts routinely purge documents to free up storage space, and the court said Turner had received permission from the Administrative Office of the Courts to destroy the documents. An internal investigation by the AOC cleared Turner of any legal wrongdoing.

Several attorneys publicly defended the family courts, but their remarks drew criticism from some of the other speakers. Barbara Monsey, a Marin attorney, said, "I can say without reservation, that there is absolutely no systemic problem with the Marin County bench."

Her comments were interrupted by an outburst from one speaker, an emotional mother who cried "Liar," at Monsey, then said "her nose is growing," as Monsey stepped down from the podium.

Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye threatened to have the woman removed.

"If there are any further disruptions for the speakers, I'm going to ask CHP to remove the speaker and explain our protocol out in the hall," she said.

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