

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR: Wednesday, November 2, 2022 at 12 PM

Contact: Roxane Marquez, Roxane.Marquez@seiu721.org, (213) 705-1078

Massive Protest to Be Held at LA Superior Court as Court Reporters Fight to Protect Family and Probate Litigants from Having to Pay Outrageous New Fee

“The Money Is Already There – Sacramento Delivered, LA Is Dropping the Ball” Says SEIU 721 Pres. David Green, Who Will Join Assemblymember Miguel Santiago and Community Leaders in Objecting to LA Superior Court’s Plan to Make the Public Pay for Mandatory Court Reporter Services

LOS ANGELES – LA Superior Court Reporters from SEIU 721, alongside the union’s President and State Legislators, will host a press conference and rally demanding that the LA Superior Court save all court reporter jobs in Family Court and Probate Court, and halt all plans to impose mandatory Court Reporter fees there.

Under the tenure of the LA Superior Court’s Executive Officer, Sherri R. Carter, anyone seeking justice in Family and Probate Court effective November 14 will have to pay for their own Court Reporter. It’s a costly fee and one which is entirely unnecessary given that the State Legislature secured millions in more funding in both this year’s and last year’s state budget specifically to pay for additional Court Reporter services and hiring.

It’s a plan that promises to impose a two-tiered justice system, disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-income families. Accordingly, impacted court reporters will rally Wednesday to insist that Ms. Carter cease and desist with her plan.

“The money is already there,” said SEIU 721 President David Green. “That’s what is so bewildering about this situation. We have the dollars. What we don’t have is a Court Executive Officer who prioritizes hiring as seriously as she should. It’s bad enough that her plan will impose outrageous fees on people seeking justice in Family Court and Probate Court – but it also subverts the will of the State Legislature. They allocated \$5 million specifically to the LA Superior Court to prevent all of this from happening. Sacramento delivered. Now LA is dropping the ball. There is no need for the public to pay for their own Court Reporter services and we intend to stop this injustice.”

- **WHO:** LA Superior Court Reporters along with SEIU 721 President David Green will be joined by:
 - CA Assemblymember Miguel Santiago
 - LA City Councilmember Paul Koretz
 - CA Assemblymember Reggie Jones-Sawyer
 - CA Assemblymember Tina McKinnor
 - CA State Senator Bob Hertzberg

- CA State Senate candidate Daniel Hertzberg (SD-20)
- Garrett Miller, Board Member, Public Defenders Association
- Pastor William D. Smart, President and CEO, Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Southern California
- Devin Osiri, Political Director, LA Fed
- WHAT: Press Conference to Stop Plans to Make Public Pay for Court Reporter Services in Family and Probate Courts and to Denounce Misuse of State Funds Intended to Hire Court Reporters
- WHEN: Wednesday, November 2 at 12 PM
- WHERE: Stanley Mosk Courthouse, 111 N. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA 90012
- MEDIA PARKING: TV trucks may park at no charge along Temple St. between Grand Ave. and Hill St. Paid parking is available at The Music Center. (Metro access is available via the Red Line – take the Civic Center exit).

BACKGROUND: Those seeking justice in Family Court and Probate Court at the LA Superior Court are on the verge of facing an injustice all on its own as plans are underway – at the insistence of the Court’s Executive Officer, Sherri R. Carter – to force litigants to pay for their own Court Reporter services effective this November 14.

It’s a costly imposition and an entirely avoidable one since the State Legislature allocated \$30 million, \$5 million of which went to the LA Superior Court, explicitly to expand the pool of Court Reporters – not reduce it. State Legislators, including Assemblyman Miguel Santiago, made sure to prioritize this funding in both this year’s state budget and the prior year’s budget.

Excuses supplied by Sherri R. Carter of the LA Superior Court that she cannot find enough qualified applicants ring hollow, particularly since the existing workforce of Court Reporters – represented by labor union SEIU 721 – diligently monitored the lackluster efforts of Ms. Carter and her team.

Among the results:

- The LA Superior Court claims to have distributed flyers to all newly California-licensed Court Reporters but really did so after just one exam.
- Ms. Carter and her team boast about advertising for recruitment in the *Journal of Court Reporting* and other Court Reporter publications but had to be cajoled for months before actually doing so.
- They have yet to offer flexible, part-time and as-needed Court Reporter positions nor have they targeted retired Court Reporters for these posts.
- They say they’ve interviewed and hired all interested parties but according to SEIU 721 – the union representing Court Reporters – many applicants were never called in for interviews, many qualified people who got interviews still were not offered positions and, all the while, the Court told all applicants that part-time work was not being considered even though it ostensibly was being offered. Some applicants were contacted more than a year after applying when, unsurprisingly, they had already taken other jobs.

- The few who were offered employment waited months for mandatory Livescans before finally being able to work, further contributing to low hiring numbers.

The public should not have to literally pay because the Court's Executive Officer has failed to prioritize Court Reporter hiring even though funding already been supplied by the State Legislature specifically for this purpose. It's a looming injustice that cannot, and will not, come to pass.

###