

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0034
(916) 319-2034
FAX (916) 319-2134

DISTRICT OFFICE
41301 12TH STREET WEST, SUITE F
(661) 267-7636
FAX (661) 267-7736

Assembly
California Legislature



TOM LACKEY
ASSEMBLYMAN, THIRTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

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March 3, 2023

Mr. David Slayton
Executive Officer/Clerk of Court
Superior Court of Los Angeles County
111 No. Hill Street, Room 105-E
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Wage Negotiations for Region 1 Court Interpreters

Dear Mr. Slayton,

I write today in regard to the ongoing wage negotiations for court interpreters in California Region 1 (Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo). I wish to express my support for these negotiations to be resolved in a manner that helps reduce staff vacancy rate and increase retention through equitable compensation.

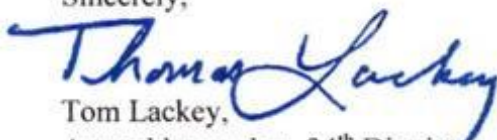
The current wage scale for court interpreters in Region 1 has not kept pace with the market for these professional services. The high vacancy rate in court interpreter staff positions, as well as the high attrition rate, are indicators that the current pay scale is impacting the courts' ability to recruit and retain staff court interpreters. Court interpreters are essential to providing access to justice. The high rate of attrition in the courts is threatening language access, due process and constitutional rights, resulting in economic and social injustice.

California has been providing a dedicated budget for interpreter services, and this budget has received ongoing funding. This is reflective of the Legislature's commitment to providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) court users, judges, attorneys, and court staff access to competent and professional language services throughout the court process.

As of January 1, 2023, the federal courts have provided a 35.5% increase to the fee paid to contract interpreters in recognition of the steeply rising cost of living we are experiencing nationwide.

For these reasons, I urge the courts in Region 1, through these wage negotiations, to work towards making court interpreting by skilled professionals a fairly compensated position.

Sincerely,


Tom Lackey,
Assemblymember, 34th District