



The following statement is sent on behalf of the Litigation Section Executive Committee Chair Douglas N. Silverstein:

Access to open and functioning courts is a bedrock principle of our democratic republic. Local governments cannot enforce laws that protect citizens, and citizens cannot resolve disputes without access to our courts--the third and co-equal branch of government. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented challenges to providing safe access to all courts, including the Los Angeles Superior Court which, with 38 courthouses and 600 bench officers, is the largest court in the United States. Through it all, the Superior Court's leadership, judicial officers and staff kept the courthouse doors open to ensure access to its essential services. The challenges now confronted by the Superior Court are reflected in calls from some quarters that it resume normal operations, while others ask that it cease certain in-person proceedings for the foreseeable future. In the face of these formidable challenges and competing demands, the Superior Court's leadership has worked hard to maintain an appropriate impartial balance, making public safety a top priority while continuing to administer justice on a daily basis. In close consultation with County health officials, the Court has continued to fulfill its vital mission by embracing technology and remote appearances, and by making modifications to Court facilities, procedures, and operations, all while overcoming significant budget cuts and recognizing that these challenges are far from over. The essential workers of the Court deserve our sincere and lasting gratitude for ensuring that we all have safe access to justice--even during the most significant public health crisis the world has seen in the last century.

-LACBA Litigation Section Executive Committee

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