



# LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

## SACRAMENTO LEGISLATIVE OFFICE

GEORGE GASCÓN • District Attorney  
SHARON L. WOO • Chief Deputy District Attorney  
JOSEPH F. INIGUEZ • Chief of Staff

DANIEL FELIZZATTO • Legislative Advocate  
TAMAR TOKAT • Legislative Advocate

August 28, 2023

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

### **ASSEMBLY BILL 1032 (PACHECO) SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Portantino:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support Assembly Bill 1032 (Pacheco).

AB 1032 makes various changes to the Trial Court Interpreter Employment and Labor Relations Act (TCIELRA), the statute governing employer-employee relations between trial courts and court interpreters. Specifically, among other provisions, this bill limits the ability of a trial court to use independent contractors beyond current restrictions, provides for the conversion of independent contractor positions into employee positions, requires the hiring of certificated and registered interpreters, eliminates the ability for courts to provisionally qualify interpreters, and allows the sharing of interpreters between neighboring counties.

Court interpreters provide essential and vital services to ensure access and fairness in both the civil and criminal courts. Prior to the enactment of TCIELRA, court interpreters worked full days as independent contractors.

TCIELRA became effective in 2003 and many of the court interpreters hired then are getting ready to retire. Today there are not enough court interpreters being hired to replace them. As a result, courts have once again become reliant on independent contractors. Around 40 percent of assignments are completed by independent contractors for any given year[,] with some regions of California having as high as 68 percent of assignments being completed by independent contractors.

These independent contractor court interpreters are not required to be available on an all-day basis in courthouses, and they also do not receive benefits like employees do. TCIELRA also does not permit court interpreters to receive bonuses and other incentives like other court employees. As a result, courts are having a difficult time finding and retaining court interpreters. In some places, courts are losing up to a third of

**August 28, 2023**  
**Page Two**

their staff to retirement, making it more difficult for courts to find interpreters. With the increase in relying on independent contractors, it means that a court interpreter will not always be available when needed.

AB 1032 will help the courts function at a higher level and better serve their communities. Court interpreters are crucial for parties to understand and express themselves in their native language.

The lack of qualified court interpreters is becoming a significant problem in our criminal court system. AB 1032 will help with greater recruitment and retention of court interpreters which will benefit the criminal court system.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Daniel Felizzatto in my Sacramento Legislative Office at (916) 442-0668.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "George Gascón", written in a cursive style.

GEORGE GASCÓN  
District Attorney

cc: Assembly Member Pacheco