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Betsy Butler

April 5, 2021

The Honorable Mark Stone
Chair, Assembly Judiciary Committee
State Capitol, Room 104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1577 (Committee on Judiciary) – Support

Dear Assemblymember Stone,

On behalf of the California Women's Law Center, we write in support of AB 1577 which will improve the procedure and transparency of judicial misconduct investigations.

The California Constitution established the Commission on Judicial Performance (CJP), which may disqualify, suspend, retire, or censure a judge for certain acts of misconduct. The Constitution also requires the CJP to make rules regarding the investigation of judges, authorizes the CJP to allow confidential complaints, and permits investigations.

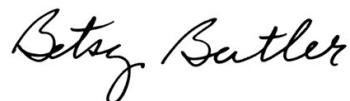
Concerns about the efficacy of the CJP have intensified in recent years. In 2016, the first audit of the CJP was conducted, and resulted in a protracted conflict and ultimately a lawsuit by the CJP against the auditor. When the results of the audit were finally released pursuant to a settlement agreement, it found the "CJP has missed opportunities to fully investigate allegations of misconduct...and has failed to ensure it is sufficiently transparent and accessible to the public."

AB 1577 would make it easier to hold judges accountable by establishing a 15-member Committee to Review the Operations and Structure of the CJP, made up of attorneys, judges, experts in judicial ethics, and the public. The Committee would study and make recommendations regarding what changes should be made to the operation and structure of the CJP to better identify and address judicial misconduct.

CWLC's mission is to create a more just and equitable society by breaking down barriers and advancing the potential of women and girls through transformative litigation, policy advocacy, and education. AB 1577 will help address judicial misconduct.

For these reasons, the California Women's Law Center supports AB 1577.

Sincerely,



Betsy Butler
Executive Director