

*KATHLEEN A. KENEALY*  
*Acting Attorney General*

*State of California*  
**DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**



455 GOLDEN GATE AVENUE, SUITE 11000  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-7004

Public: (415) 703-5500  
Telephone: (415) 703-5861  
Facsimile: (415) 703-1234  
E-Mail: [Joyce.Blair@doj.ca.gov](mailto:Joyce.Blair@doj.ca.gov)

January 12, 2017

The Honorable Maggie Fleming  
Humboldt County District Attorney  
825 Fifth Street, Fourth Floor  
Eureka, CA 95501

RE: Humboldt County Superior Court Judges Christopher Wilson and Dale Reinholsten

Dear Ms. Fleming:

Last year you referred to the Attorney General's Office public admonishments issued by the Commission on Judicial Performance against Humboldt County Superior Judges Christopher Wilson and Dale Reinholsten. Both judges were reprimanded for signing salary affidavits incorrectly claiming they had no cases outstanding for decision in excess of 90 days. It was your feeling that the Humboldt County District Attorney's Office had a conflict in determining whether to take any further action against these judges based on the size of your county and the amount of regular interaction with these judges.

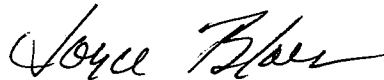
We have concluded our review of these matters and as discussed below, determined that no action is warranted by this office. Of primary importance to our decision is the fact that California Judges are subject to scrutiny by the Commission on Judicial Performance. Under the California Constitution, that entity is tasked with the responsibility to fully investigate the conduct of judges and implement appropriate sanctions ranging in severity from advisory letter, to private admonishment, to public admonishments, to public censure and, in the most serious cases, removal from office.

In determining that public admonishments were the appropriate sanction against Judges Wilson and Reinholsten, the Commission specifically recognized that "A judge's workload may make prompt decision of all matters submitted to the judge impossible, particularly in counties like Humboldt where the average workload appears to exceed the statewide average." You echoed the Commission's opinion regarding caseload in your observation that "Humboldt County judges all face persistently extreme workloads. The state has determined that to give Humboldt County judges reasonable workloads two additional judges would be needed."

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For all these reasons, the Attorney General's Office has determined that no further action against Judges Wilson and Reinholtsen will be taken. It is our belief in these instances that the Commission on Judicial Performance was the most qualified entity to investigate and take appropriate action, and in this case it did so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joyce Blair".

JOYCE BLAIR  
Supervising Deputy Attorney General

For KATHLEEN A. KENEALY  
Acting Attorney General