

**SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF MARIN**



Press Release
(January 16, 2008)

**ASSEMBLYMEMBER HUFFMAN GETS A
BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF COURT**

As an attorney, Assemblymember Jared Huffman has spent plenty of time in courtrooms, but he had a rare opportunity to see the court from a different perspective one day in December. Huffman spent an afternoon with Marin County Superior Court leadership to learn about the challenges facing California's trial courts and to see, firsthand, some of the innovative programs that are in place in the Marin Court. He joined Judge Verna Adams on the bench to view the Court's family law pro per calendar, which provides volunteer attorneys to assist self-represented parties in resolving their divorce cases. On that particular calendar, Huffman observed Judge Adams preside over 34 cases in which the parties were stalled in moving forward on their dissolutions. In all of these cases, attorneys were on hand to confer with the parties and help them by completing paperwork, explaining procedures and drafting orders in their cases. Huffman was very impressed with this vanguard solution to a major challenge facing the courts today -- how to reach out to those who cannot adequately represent themselves but cannot afford to hire lawyers.

As part of a "Day on the Bench" educational program co-sponsored by the Judicial Council of California and the California Judges Association, Assemblymember Huffman listened as court leaders described some of the statewide legislative initiatives that the Legislature will deal with when it resumes in January. Court facilities, new judgeships and equal access to justice were among the topics discussed at the meeting and remain high priorities for the Judicial Branch in the new legislative session. The Court also highlighted local programs that illustrate the Marin Court's commitment to customer service, help for those who cannot afford attorneys, and other initiatives that the Court has undertaken to be more responsive to Marin residents, such as the Court Community Advisory Committee and the Legal Self Help Center of Marin.

Court leaders praised Assemblymember Huffman for taking the time to become more conversant in the challenges facing the Judicial Branch and the Marin Superior Court. Assistant Presiding Judge Verna Adams, who initially extended the invitation to Huffman, said, "I was delighted to meet with Jared Huffman. As a lawyer, he is already very well informed about the issues facing the trial courts. But as a legislator, he is incredibly valuable to the courts because of his ability to quickly comprehend complex legislative proposals. We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated and responsive representative in Sacramento."

As a result of the success of Assemblymember Huffman's visit to the Court, more "Day on the Bench" visits will be scheduled in the future.

For additional information regarding this press release, contact Kim Turner,
Court Executive Officer at: (415) 473-6244.