

[News \(/therecorder/news/\)](#)

# California Chief Justice Suspends Trials Statewide for 60 Days

The order also empowered trial courts to adopt any new or amended rules intended to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

By [Cheryl Miller \(https://www.law.com/therecorder/author/profile/Cheryl-Miller/\)](#) | March 24, 2020 at 12:17 AM

[f](#) [in](#) [t](#) [✉](#) [http://www.almreprints.com](#)



Chief Justice of California Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye (Photo: Jason Doiy/ALM)

Under pressure [from anxious lawyers \(https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/22/lawyers-press-california-judiciary-for-uniform-operating-standards-amid-pandemic/\)](#), court workers and judges around the state, Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye late Monday suspended all jury trials across the state for 60 days.

In an [order \(https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/6817977/Statewide-Order-by-the-Chief-Justice-Chair-of.pdf\)](#) citing [constitutional \(https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CONS&sectionNum=SEC.%206.&article=VI\)](#) and [statutory](#)

[\(<https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-68115.html>\)](https://codes.findlaw.com/ca/government-code/gov-sect-68115.html)

authority, the chief justice also empowered trial courts to adopt “any

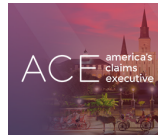
proposed rules or rule amendment” intended to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The courts’ rule changes will not have to circulate for the typical 45 days of public comment.

The order notes that courts have not been able to comply with orders for Californians to stay home and to maintain six feet of distance among themselves.

“Even if court facilities could allow for sufficient social distancing, the closure of schools means that many court employees, litigants, witnesses, and potential jurors cannot leave their homes to attend court proceedings because they must stay home to supervise their children,” the order said. “These restrictions have also made it nearly impossible for courts to assemble juries.”

[\(<https://www.event.propertycasualty360.com/ACE>\)](https://www.event.propertycasualty360.com/ACE)

## America's Claims Executive (ACE) 2020



[\(<https://www.event.propertycasualty360.com/ACE>\)](https://www.event.propertycasualty360.com/ACE) EVENT

ACE Leadership Forum & Expo is the annual conference for Senior Claims Executives in Insurance organizations.

**Get More Information** (<https://www.event.propertycasualty360.com/ACE>)

For more than a week, Cantil-Sakauye has signed **emergency orders** ([\(<https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/court-emergency-orders-6794321>\)](https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/court-emergency-orders-6794321)) for courts around the state, authorizing presiding judges to extend filing and proceeding deadlines and to move hearings to locations outside traditional courthouses. The result has been a patchwork of rules, with some courts shutting down and others scaling back operations but still allowing public access.

Prosecutors, private attorneys and public defenders have **pleaded** ([\(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/22/lawyers-press-california-judiciary-for-uniform-operating-standards-amid-pandemic/>\)](https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/22/lawyers-press-california-judiciary-for-uniform-operating-standards-amid-pandemic/)) with the chief justice in recent days to employ uniform standards across the courts. Cantil-Sakauye has repeatedly **referred** ([\(<https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/california-chief-justice-issues-second-advisory-on-emergency-relief-measures>\)](https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/california-chief-justice-issues-second-advisory-on-emergency-relief-measures)) in statements to her limited authority “as well as the role of independent trial courts to manage their operations.”

That stance appeared to soften with the new order, which followed four days of reports of potential exposures in three courthouses.

On Thursday, a Merced County judge **declared a mistria** ([\(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/20/mistrial-declared-in-merced-murder-case-amid-covid-19-exposure-fears/>\)](https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/20/mistrial-declared-in-merced-murder-case-amid-covid-19-exposure-fears/)) after an expected

witness in a three-defendant homicide trial warned the court that he had been in contact with a colleague who subsequently tested positive for

COVID-19. The witness had attended the proceedings over several days before he reported feeling ill on Thursday. At least two deputy district attorneys and one defense attorney in the case have self-quarantined.

On Monday, Los Angeles County Superior Court officials **announced** ([http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020323182349NR\\_Edelman\\_March\\_24\\_2020.pdf](http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020323182349NR_Edelman_March_24_2020.pdf)) that a judge handling a juvenile dependency calendar had developed symptoms consistent with COVID-19. The court asked the unnamed judge, who was not tested, and court staff to self-quarantine.

That announcement followed Presiding Judge Kevin Brazile's **order** ([http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020322105355NR\\_Sylmar\\_Closure\\_March\\_22\\_2020\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020322105355NR_Sylmar_Closure_March_22_2020_FINAL.pdf)) to close the Sylmar courthouse for three days after a deputy public defender who appeared there was diagnosed with the novel coronavirus.

Brazile on Monday **said** ([http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020323185249GO\\_March232020\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.lacourt.org/newsmedia/uploads/142020323185249GO_March232020_FINAL.pdf)) that only attorneys, judges, court staff and litigants with business before the court will be allowed into the county's 38 courthouses.

f SHARE    t SHARE

### Cheryl Miller



(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/author/profile/Cheryl-Miller/>)

*Cheryl Miller, based in Sacramento, covers the state legislature and emerging industries, including autonomous vehicles and marijuana. She authors the weekly cannabis newsletter Higher Law (<https://www.law.com/static/briefings/#Higher-Law>). Contact her at [cmiller@alm.com](mailto:cmiller@alm.com) (<mailto:cmiller@alm.com>). On Twitter: [@CapitalAccounts](https://twitter.com/CapitalAccounts) (<https://twitter.com/CapitalAccounts>).*

More from this author → (<https://www.law.com/therecorder/author/profile/Cheryl-Miller/>)

### Dig Deeper

[State and Local Government \(/topics/state-and-local-government/\)](/topics/state-and-local-government/)

[Court Administration \(/topics/court-administration/\)](/topics/court-administration/)    [Judges \(/topics/judges/\)](/topics/judges/)

[Litigation \(/topics/litigation/\)](/topics/litigation/)

### Trending Stories

- 1 **David Lat Put on Ventilator, in Critical Condition With COVID-19 Infection** (</newyorklawjournal/2020/03/21/david->

**lat-is-put-on-ventilator-as-his-covid-19-condition-worsens/)**

TOPICS (/TOPICS/) SURVEYS & RANKINGS ▾ (/RANKINGS/) CASES ▾ (/THERECORDER/CASE-DIGESTS/) ALL NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL (/NEWYORKLAWJOURNAL/) NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL (/NEWYORKLAWJOURNAL/SITEMAP/)

- 2 **David Lat, Battling COVID-19, Speaks From Hospital About Fears, Hopes and What People Should Know (/newyorklawjournal/2020/03/19/david-lat-speaks-from-the-hospital-about-fears-hopes-and-what-people-should-know/)**  
NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL  
(/NEWYORKLAWJOURNAL/)
- 3 **David Lat Undergoing 'Experimental' Drug Therapy, His Husband Says (/therecorder/2020/03/23/david-lat-undergoing-experimental-drug-therapy-his-husband-says/)**  
NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL  
(/NEWYORKLAWJOURNAL/)
- 4 **Class Action Filed Against China Over COVID-19 Outbreak (/dailybusinessreview/2020/03/13/class-action-filed-against-china-over-covid-19-outbreak/)**  
DAILY BUSINESS REVIEW  
(/DAILYBUSINESSREVIEW/)
- 5 **As Cuomo Imposes '100% Workforce Reduction,' Law Firms Wrestle With Details (/newyorklawjournal/2020/03/20/as-cuomo-imposes-100-workforce-reduction-law-firms-await-specific-details/)**  
NEW YORK LAW JOURNAL  
(/NEWYORKLAWJOURNAL/)

[TOPICS \(/TOPICS/\)](#) [SURVEYS & RANKINGS \(/RANKINGS/\)](#) [CASES \(/THERECORDER/CASE-DIGESTS/\)](#) [ALL SECTIONS \(/THERECORDER/SITEMAP/\)](#)



FEATURED PRODUCT

**Global Briefing**  
**[https://store.law.com/Registra](https://store.law.com/Registra&productCode=LAWINTEDGLO)**  
**[&productCode=LAWINTEDGLO](https://store.law.com/Registra&productCode=LAWINTEDGLO)**

A weekly, curated selection of our international content from around the globe, across the business of law, in-house, regulatory, technology and more, with expert insights from our senior editors.

TOPICS (/TOPICS/) SURVEYS & RANKINGS (/RANKINGS/) CASES (/THERECORDER/CASE-DIGESTS/)

ALL SECTIONS (/THERECORDER/SITEMAP/)

Learn More

(<https://store.law.com/Registration/MyAccount.aspx&productCode=LAWINTEDGLOBALLAWYER#/EmailP>)

## Recommended Stories

(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/22/lawyers-press-california-judiciary-for-uniform-operating-standards-amid-pandemic/>)

### **Lawyers Press California Judiciary for Uniform Operating Standards Amid Pandemic** (<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/22/lawyers-press-california-judiciary-for-uniform-operating-standards-amid-pandemic/>)

CHERYL MILLER (/AUTHOR/PROFILE/CHERYL-MILLER/) | MARCH 22, 2020

Meanwhile, Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye on Sunday said she is canceling Tuesday's Judicial Council meeting so that members—which include judges, commissioners and executive officers—can focus on work in their courts.

(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/23/with-time-of-the-essence-chhabria-presses-ahead-with-sentencing-hearing-without-defendant/>)

### **With Time of the Essence, Chhabria Presses Ahead With Sentencing Hearing Without Defendant** (<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/23/with-time-of-the-essence-chhabria-presses-ahead-with-sentencing-hearing-without-defendant/>)

ROSS TODD (/THERECORDER/AUTHOR/PROFILE/ROSS-TODD/) | MARCH 23, 2020

U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria found that a defendant asking for a sentence of time served can voluntarily waive an appearance at sentencing in a

## Featured Firms

### **Law Offices of Gary Martin Hays & Associates P.C.**

620 GLEN IRIS DR NE SUITE 102  
ATLANTA, GA 30308  
(470) 294-1674 [www.garymartinhays.com](http://www.garymartinhays.com)

### **Law Offices of Mark E. Salomone**

2 OLIVER ST #608  
BOSTON, MA 02109  
(857) 444-6468 [www.marksalomone.com](http://www.marksalomone.com)

### **Smith & Hassler**

1225 N LOOP W #525  
HOUSTON, TX 77008  
(713) 739-1250 [www.smithandhassler.com](http://www.smithandhassler.com)

Presented by BigVoodoo →

situation where the hearing would otherwise be delayed because of a public health crisis.

(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/20/mistrial-declared-in-merced-murder-case-amid-covid-19-exposure-fears/>) ALL SECTIONS ▾ ([/THERECORDER/SITEMAP/](#))

## **Mistrial Declared in Merced Murder Case Amid COVID-19 Exposure Fears** **(<https://www.law.com/therecorder/2020/03/20/mistrial-declared-in-merced-murder-case-amid-covid-19-exposure-fears/>)**

CHERYL MILLER ([/AUTHOR/PROFILE/CHERYL-MILLER/](#))  
| MARCH 20, 2020

Merced County Superior Court Judge Carole Ash declared a mistrial and advised everyone in the courtroom to talk to the public health department or a doctor. The court's executive officer released a statement saying the courtroom will be disinfected.

## More from ALM

[CLE Center](#)[Legal Compass](#)[Events](#)[Webcasts](#)[Lawjobs](#)[Professional Announcements](#)

### Premium Subscription

With this subscription you will receive unlimited access to high quality, online, on-demand premium content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry. This is perfect for attorneys licensed in multiple jurisdictions or for attorneys that have fulfilled their CLE requirement but need to access resourceful information for their practice areas.

[View Now \(http://clecenter.com/Program/Premium.aspx\)](http://clecenter.com/Program/Premium.aspx)

### Team Accounts

Our Team Account subscription service is for legal teams of four or more attorneys. Each attorney is granted unlimited access to high quality, on-demand premium content from well-respected faculty in the legal industry along with administrative access to easily manage CLE for the entire team.

[View Now \(http://clecenter.com/CleForFirm/Default.aspx\)](http://clecenter.com/CleForFirm/Default.aspx)

### Bundle Subscriptions

Gain access to some of the most knowledgeable and experienced attorneys with our 2 bundle options! Our Compliance bundles are curated by CLE Counselors and include current legal topics and challenges within the industry. Our second option allows you to build your bundle and strategically select content that pertains to your needs. Both options are priced the same.

[View Now \(http://clecenter.com/Default.aspx\)](http://clecenter.com/Default.aspx)

**[CLE Center → \(http://clecenter.com\)](http://clecenter.com)**

ALM Legal Publication Newsletters

Sign Up Today and Never Miss Another Story.

Subscribe Now

As part of your digital membership, you can sign up for an unlimited number of a wide range of complimentary newsletters. Visit your My Account page to make your selections. Get the timely legal news and critical analysis you cannot afford to miss. Tailored just for you. In your inbox. Every day.

(https://store.law.com/Registration promoCode=CA#/EmailPref) Privacy Policy (https://www.alm.com/policy-new/)

./()

FOLLOW US

(https://www.facebook.com/LawdotcomALM/)

(https://twitter.com/lawdotcom)

(https://www.linkedin.com/company/law-com/)

(http://feeds.feedblitz.com/law/legal-news/)

About Us (/static/about-us/) / Contact Us (/static/contact-us/) / Site Map (/sitemap/) / Advertise With Us (/static/advertise-with-us/) / Customer Service (https://www.alm.com/cc / Terms of Service (https://www.alm.com/terms-of-use/) / FAQ (/static/frequently-asked-questions/) / Privacy Policy (https://www.alm.com/privacy-policy-new/)

PUBLICATIONS

LAW TOPICS

RANKINGS

MORE

LAW.COM

- The American Lawyer (/americanlawyer/)
Corporate Counsel (/corpcounsel/)
National Law Journal (/nationallawjournal/)
New York Law Journal (/newyorklawjournal/)
New Jersey Law Journal (/njlawjournal/)
The Recorder (/therecorder/)
More Publications > (/publications/)

- Litigation (/topics/litigation/)
Deals and Transactions (/topics/deals-and-transactions/)
Law Firm Management (/topics/law-firm-management/)
Legal Practice Management (/topics/legal-practice-management/)
Cybersecurity (/topics/cybersecurity/)
Intellectual Property (/topics/intellectual-property/)
More Law Topics > (/topics/)

- Am Law 100 (/americanlawyer/rankings/the-2019-am-law-100/)
Am Law 200 (/americanlawyer/rankings/the-2018-am-law-200--the-american-lawyer/)
Global 100 (/americanlawyer/rankings/global-100/)
National Law Journal 500 (/nationallawjournal/rankings/the-nlj-500/)
Pro Bono Scorecard (/americanlawyer/rankings/pro-bono/)
The A-List (/americanlawyer/rankings/a-list/)
More Rankings > (/rankings/)

- Events (/events/)
Legal Compass (https://www.alm.com/intelligence/solutions-we-provide/business-of-law-solutions/legal-compass/)
Editorial Calendar (/editorial-calendar/)
Legal Dictionary (https://dictionary.law.com/)
Lawjobs.com (http://lawjobs.com/)
Law Firms (/law-firms/)
Law Schools (/topics/legal-education/)
Legal Newswire (/legalnewswire/)
Verdict Search (https://verdictsearch.com/featured-verdicts/)

- Law.com US Editor
Law.com Int'l Edition (/introduction/)
Briefings (/static/briefing-analysis/)
Podcasts (/podcasts/)
Webcasts (/webcasts/)

Copyright © 2020 ALM Media Properties, LLC. All Rights Reserved.