



The State Bar of California

OPEN SESSION

AGENDA ITEM

50-10 SEPTEMBER 2022

BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE III.C

DATE: September 22, 2022

TO: Members, Board of Trustees

FROM: Elizabeth Hom, Program Director, Office of Access & Inclusion
Christopher McConkey, Program Supervisor, Office of Access & Inclusion

SUBJECT: Approval of California Indian Legal Services Appointment of State Bar Representative to the Board of Trustees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 4.15.3 of the Board of Trustees *Policy Manual* authorizes the Board of Trustees to make appointments to the governing bodies of certain legal aid programs in California. These programs are federal Legal Services Corporation (LSC) grantees. One such provider, California Indian Legal Services (CILS), has nominated Judge Christine Williams, Chief Judge of the Wilton Tribal Court, to serve on its board. This memo recommends Judge Williams for the Board of Trustees' consideration at its September 2022 meeting.

BACKGROUND

Congress helps fund access to civil justice through LSC grants to nonprofit legal aid providers.¹ Federal regulations require LSC grantees to fill most seats on their boards with state, county, or municipal bar association appointees.²

CILS is a legal aid nonprofit that receives LSC funding.³ It is an expert in the unique legal issues facing California's tribes, tribal organizations, and Native American residents.

¹ The LSC Act as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 2996 et seq.

² 45 CFR section 1607.3(b)(1) states, "A majority of the members of the governing body shall be attorney members appointed by the governing body(ies) of one or more State, county or municipal bar associations..."

³ CILS's LSC profile is available at lsc.gov/grants/our-grantees/california-indian-legal-services-inc-program-profile.

CILS's bylaws provide for an 11-member board. Four members must be State Bar of California appointees and licensees. The bylaws require these appointees to have "a sincere commitment to the defense and enhancement of Indian rights." Seven members must be Indians indigenous to California. The State Bar has historically received appointment recommendations from CILS, which reviews and evaluates applications.

CILS currently has two vacancies on its board, one of which is for a State Bar appointee. CILS received two applications and recommends that Judge Williams of the Wilton Tribal Court be appointed. Judge Williams would serve a three-year term, effective immediately upon her appointment at the Board of Trustees' September 2022 meeting.

DISCUSSION

The CILS Board of Trustees' nomination of Judge Williams, as provided in Attachment B, reflects that body's strong support for her appointment. CILS describes Judge Williams as having the experience and perspective to advance CILS's mission and the State Bar's diversity, equity, and inclusion priorities.

FISCAL/PERSONNEL IMPACT

None

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

None

AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES POLICY MANUAL

None

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Goal 2. Protect the Public by Enhancing Access to and Inclusion in the Legal System

- b. 4. Make the State Bar a leader in connecting the public to legal representation by enhancing public awareness of the resources available and continually enhancing those resources.

Goal 4. Protect the Public by Engaging Partners

- d. 1. Collaborate with the legislature and other stakeholders to increase public protection and support the State Bar's mission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Should the Board Executive Committee concur in the proposed action, passage of the following resolution is recommended:

RESOLVED, that the Board Executive Committee recommends that the Board of Trustees approves the appointment of Judge Christine Williams to the California Indian Legal Services Board of Trustees for a three-year term commencing on September 22, 2022, and expiring on September 21, 2025.

Should the Board of Trustees concur in the proposed action, passage of the following resolution is recommended:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the Board Executive Committee, approves the appointment of Judge Christine Williams to the California Indian Legal Services Board of Trustees for a three-year term commencing on September 22, 2022, and expiring on September 21, 2025.

ATTACHMENTS LIST

- A.** California Indian Legal Services Board Roster
- B.** Letter of Recommendation from the California Indian Legal Services Board of Trustees

ATTACHMENT A**California Indian Legal Services Board Roster**

First Name	Last Name	Attorney Member	Public Member	Term Expiration
Mark	Romero		✓	Holdover*
Joe	Ayala	✓		December 2021**
Mercedes	Amavisca		✓	December 2022
Andre	Cramblit		✓	June 2023
Robert	Gonzalez	✓		March 2022*
Jessica	Goodrow		✓	April 2023
John	Hueston	✓		December 2022
Merri	Lopez-Keifer		✓	December 2022
Victorio	Shaw		✓	Holdover*
Proposed New Member				
Hon. Christine	Williams	✓		September 2025

* CILS's bylaws provide that "Trustees, except if removed for cause, shall serve until the qualification of their successors." "Holdover" describes such Trustees.

** Revisions to CILS's bylaws, scheduled for a vote on September 22, 2022, would automatically reset certain terms. These terms would reset for three years.

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Andre Cramblit
*Karuk Tribe of
California*

Jessica Goodrow
*Round Valley Indian
Tribes*

Victorio Shaw
Hoopa Valley Tribe

**CA State Bar
Appointees**
John Hueston
Attorney at Law

Robert Gonzalez
Attorney at Law

Merri Lopez-Keifer
Attorney at Law

March 25, 2022

ATTACHMENT B

State Bar of California
State Bar Board of Trustees
Mr. Ruben Duran, Chairperson
180 Howard Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Chairperson Duran:

We currently have one State Bar appointed seat vacant on the California Indian Legal Services (CILS) Board. The CILS Board of Trustees would like to formally nominate Judge Christine Williams. Please find attached her letter of interest and resume.

Judge Christine Williams is a well qualified candidate, and she has a high acumen in federal Indian law. She is a member of the Yurok Tribe and has practiced law for over twenty years. She currently serves as the Chief Judge for the Wilton Rancheria Tribal Court and previously directed the UC Davis School of Law, Tribal Justice Project. She is a visionary and has deep roots in tribal communities, both rural and urban, and will give us valuable insight. Judge Williams is a highly respected lawyer statewide, and we have no doubt she will represent the State Bar with a high level of integrity and expertise. Our bylaws highlight that we should give preference to women and indigenous California people, which she is both.

We are embarking on an exciting time at CILS, where we will be revisioning and launching into many endeavours. We need committed board members who can dedicate their time, understand the needs of indigent Tribes, how to best serve them, and we are certain she is up to the task.

Please feel free to reach out to me should you have any questions. We look forward to this nomination being considered and hopefully approved at the May 2022 State Bar Board meeting. Thank you for your partnership in serving tribal communities throughout California.

Respectfully,



Mark Romero
Chairperson