

## **Rural Community Rights: Equal Access To Justice via Two-Way Closed Circuit TV/VIDEO CAM OR WEB CAM**

WHEREAS all people have the right to equal access to justice, yet low-income communities, migrants, non-English speakers, tribal members, often live in rural communities far from courthouses, thus there exists a resulting unfair deprivation with unequal access to justice by vulnerable populations; and

WHEREAS the precedence for maximum distance to testify or be heard for the purpose of a judicial proceeding is set by current code, which limits to 75 miles the distance a witness must travel when called to testify in a deposition; and

WHEREAS many rural court houses were decommissioned as a result of funding cutbacks and now some rural, low income, California residents are required to travel +200 miles, far more than 75 miles, to be heard in the nearest court of law, thus unfairly depriving them of equal access to justice and burdening them with the extra cost in terms of time and travel expenses hoisted upon them;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Democratic Party opposes incapacity of the state court system and supports efforts and state funding to reopen decommissioned justice court rooms in rural communities, at a minimum by installing two-way closed circuit television and video cameras for the purpose of remote communication and hearings between judges, judicial counsel and the parties to judicial matters including witnesses at civil and criminal proceedings and depositions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the State of California Commission on Judicial Performance, Governor Brown, Democratic state constitutional members and Democratic members of the California Legislature.

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By unanimous vote.