

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF BUTTE



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For Immediate Release:
October 8, 2026

PRESS RELEASE

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF BUTTE FACES CRITICALLY LOW JUROR TURNOUT

Every week in Butte County, Butte County Superior Court (the Court) holds criminal and civil trials that depend on the participation of jurors, local residents who serve as the community's voice in the justice system. Without sufficient jurors, trials may proceed and access to justice would be delayed for individuals seeking to have their day in court.

THE PROBLEM: Jury turnout in Butte County is critically low.

Across Butte County, fewer residents are appearing for jury service. This local issue resonates with a wider trend of low juror turn out in the state. From 2018 to 2019 only 46% of California jurors summoned appeared for jury service. In 2025, the juror appearance rate was approximately 21% at the Butte County Courthouse in Oroville, CA and approximately 14% at the North Butte County Courthouse in Chico, CA.

THE IMPACT: Declining jury turnout affects all Butte County residents.

Low juror appearance rates have significant consequences:

- Criminal and Civil cases may be postponed potentially creating a backlog in the court's trial calendars.
- The administrative burden is increased for the Court as it must summon a higher number of jurors to make up for low juror response rates. This creates a bigger impact to the community as more residents are likely to be summoned.
- Low juror turnout rates increase the likelihood that the Court will exhaust its juror pool as it must summon a high number of jurors.

RESIDENT PARTICIPATION IS CRUCIAL:

Jurors play an essential role in our justice system. Under the U.S. and California Constitutions, every person who is accused of a crime or is involved in a civil dispute has the right to a jury trial. This Constitutional promise is only possible when residents show up for their community and fulfill their civic duty as jurors.

FAIRNESS REQUIRES A FULL AND DIVERSE JURY POOL:

The Constitutional right to a jury trial is contingent upon having a pool of jurors that accurately represents a fair cross section of the community. When juror turnout is low, juries are drawn from a smaller, less diverse pool. If this continues, it may call into question the legitimacy of juries and jeopardize due process in Butte County.

JUROR CENTERED PRACTICES:

The Court recognizes that receiving a jury summons can be daunting for residents. With this in mind, the Court strives to implement jury service practices that take the juror experience into account such as:

- Adherence to California's one day one trial system where prospective jurors serve for the duration of one trial if selected or one day regardless of how far they get in the selection process.
- The implementation of postcard summons in order to provide clearer and more accessible information including reporting instructions and a link to the Court's Jury Service webpage that provides general information for prospective jurors:
[Jury Service | Superior Court of California | County of Butte](#)
- The option to request a postponement or an excusal from service as a result of undue hardship. This can be submitted prior to the scheduled service date or in-person on the day of service.
- Providing prospective jurors with a variety of response options and information resources including:
 - Online 24/7 via the Court's [Jury Portal](#) where prospective jurors can update their contact information and request a postponement or excusal.
 - Over the phone by calling the Jury Office at (530) 532-7001 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday - Friday.
 - In-person at the Jury Office located in Chico Courthouse or Oroville Courthouse.

The Court values prospective jurors and makes every effort to respect their time by making jury service procedures as clear and accommodating as possible.

CONCLUSION:

In order to continue enjoying the privileges and rights that the U.S. democracy affords, individuals must invest in the democratic process. To this end, Butte County Superior Court urgently asks residents to fulfill their Constitutional duty and respond to jury summonses. While the Court does not seek to penalize residents who are unable to complete their jury service, California law authorizes courts to order legal penalties for non-response to a jury duty summons. Prospective jurors who do not respond to their summons or appear for jury service will receive a failure to appear notice from the Court via mail instructing them to reschedule their jury service date. Failure to respond or reschedule jury service after that may result in a fine up to \$1,500 pursuant to California Code of Civil Procedure § 209.