



SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, COUNTY OF BUTTE

* * * NEWS RELEASE * * *

MEDIA ADVISORY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2023

Ms. Leah B. Sears has been selected by the judges of the Butte Superior Court to serve as a commissioner. She will fill the position vacated by Virginia L. Gingery due to her appointment as a judge by Governor Gavin Newsom on October 5, 2023.

Ms. Sears will assume her responsibilities on December 18, 2023. A public investiture ceremony will be held on December 22, 2023 at 4:00 P.M. in Courtroom 1 of the North Butte County Courthouse in Chico.

Ms. Sears received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from Northern Arizona University in 2007 and her Juris Doctor degree from California Western School of Law in 2010, where she graduated Cum Laude and as the Executive Editor of the Law Review. She was admitted to the State Bar of California, State Bar of Arizona, and the Bar for the United States District Court in 2012. She began her legal career as defense counsel in federal and superior courts in Arizona before moving to Butte County in 2013. She has worked as a deputy district attorney and supervising district attorney at the Butte County District Attorney's Office since January 2013, where she has earned several internal awards for her work as a trial attorney.

Ms. Sears is an active volunteer in Butte County and well regarded in the local legal community. Her experience and reputation for a strong work ethic prepare her well to serve the Butte Superior Court as a commissioner.

On the selection of Ms. Sears, the Presiding Judge of the Butte Superior Court, the Honorable Kimberly Merrifield, comments, "All of the judicial officers at the Butte Superior Court are pleased to welcome Ms. Sears as our newest commissioner. We know she will be a valued member of our Bench and serve our community with commitment and dedication."

The Butte Superior Court currently has 11 judge positions and 2 commissioner positions. Commissioner Sears' initial assignment will be to preside over hearings for child support, small claims, traffic, family, unlawful detainer, civil harassment, and other matters as assigned.