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INSIGHTS ON APPELLATE ISSUES, TRIAL CONSULTATIONS, AND EVALUATING APPEALS

[California Supreme Court's Workload Continues to Increase](#)

September 15, 2010 by [Michael Walsh](#)

The California Supreme Court has [released its annual report](#) describing the operations of the Court from 2009 to 2010. The Court issued 105 opinions in this period, 42 of which were in civil cases. However, this does not account for the 30 habeas corpus petitions denied by order, so the court's workload continues to be dominated by criminal matters. While the total filings with the court increased to 9,917 (from 9,556), the court's output was reduced from 110 opinions in the prior year, and total dispositions decreased by almost 2%. One factor might have been the mandatory furlough, which decreased total work hours by over 4%. In addition, the last conference of the court was delayed into the next fiscal year to accommodate judicial confirmation hearings. Interestingly, the number of civil petitions for review decreased to 1,219 (from 1,307). This was offset by an increase in criminal filings, particularly habeas corpus petitions in non-capital criminal matters. Depublication orders reached a record low of four, beating the previous record of ten in 2007-2008. This compares to the 1980's and early 1990's, in which the court regularly depublished over 100 opinions each year. The Court issued a single publication order.

This follows a [report by the AOC Office of Court Research](#) on the fiscal year 2009, which shows that filings in the California Superior Court topped 10 million for the first time, a 7% increase from 2008 and a 20% increase over the last ten years. This reflects an increase in each major category (civil, criminal, family and juvenile) although the largest increase was in civil filings –with unlimited civil filings increasing more than 17% and limited civil filings increasing almost 14%. The increase in unlimited civil filings was largely driven by nontort cases, as the number of tort cases filed only increased by 2%. While data on unlimited filings is incomplete, a similar trend is apparent.