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LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCILMEMBER

— DISTRICT 10 —

****PRESS RELEASE****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 22nd, 2020

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Council President Martinez, Councilmember Ridley-Thomas Call on Superior Court to Cancel Evictions Proceedings During Pandemic

LOS ANGELES – Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez and Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas, along with Councilmembers Cedillo, Krekorian, Blumenfield, Harris-Dawson and O’Farrell, issued a Letter Friday calling for the Los Angeles Superior Court to immediately cancel eviction proceedings due to the significant COVID-19 surge and increased infections in Los Angeles City and County.

The letter was sent to the Los Angeles Superior Court’s Presiding Judge Kevin C. Brazile and Presiding Judge-Elect Eric C. Taylor. Under orders from the California Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye, local presiding judges have the authority to regulate their court operations in the interest of public safety as the Los Angeles Superior Court has already done in various ways.

“COVID-19 infections are skyrocketing in Los Angeles unlike any place in the world and we must do all we can to protect Angelenos from infection, including unnecessary eviction proceedings during the height of our local and state emergency,” said Council President Martinez. “We implore our stewards of the

court to take immediate action to halt evictions and protect the good people of Los Angeles during these difficult and challenging days.”

“As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on and devastates our communities, it is imperative that we take immediate steps to halt eviction trials and protect our residents from further exposure to the virus,” said Councilmember Mark Ridley-Thomas. “As we brace ourselves for increased community spread over the coming weeks, I am confident that the Superior Court will take the necessary action to safeguard the housing of vulnerable households and preserve public health.”

The Councilmembers strongly urge the Presiding Judge to take action to substantially reduce the public health risk associated with processing eviction cases by immediately issuing an order halting in-person hearings in eviction-related matters. They requested the order include trials (jury and bench), motions, status conferences, settlement conferences, and any other hearing or proceeding sought to be conducted in person. If any of these hearings are essential to protect health and safety, they should happen remotely.

The Councilmembers also called for the Presiding Judge to put forth an order halting the issuance of summons on complaints for unlawful detainers unless the court finds that the particular action is necessary to protect public health and safety. The Judicial Council had a similar emergency rule in place from April to August of 2020. Chief Justice Sakauye has indicated that future emergency rules should be designed and implemented at the local level, it now falls to the LA County Presiding Judges to ensure the health and safety of local judicial processes.

A University of Pennsylvania model recently predicted that a 1% eviction rate leads to a 5-10% higher incidence of COVID and one death for every 60 evictions. A study from the Public Health Schools at UCLA and Johns Hopkins found that 27 states lifting their eviction moratoriums earlier this year accounted for 433,700 extra COVID-cases and 10,700 extra deaths. According to November’s Census Pulse Survey, over one million California households are behind on their rent. A significant portion of these households are in Los Angeles County.

On Thursday, an astonishing 14,418 new Covid-19 infections were registered in L.A. County for a total of 581,519 cases with available ICU beds at 0%. As some have reported, Los Angeles is now the epicenter for COVID-19 infections in the United States, having the highest rates of any county in California and surpassing the rates of many countries across the world. Action by all levels of government is needed to stem the spread of this contagious virus and keep families safe in their homes.

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