



UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

PRESS RELEASE

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Date: May 18, 2022

**SENATE CONFIRMS SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE SUNSHINE SUZANNE SYKES
AS UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

On May 18, 2022, the United States Senate confirmed President Joe Biden's nomination of Riverside County Superior Court Judge Sunshine Suzanne Sykes to serve as a federal district judge for the United States District Court for the Central District of California. Judge Sykes will preside over matters in Riverside in the Court's Eastern Division.

Judge Sykes has served as a Superior Court Judge for Riverside County since her appointment by Governor Jerry Brown in 2013. Judge Sykes has presided over civil matters, including over 90 trials. Most recently, beginning in 2019, she has presided over matters in the complex civil litigation department. Additionally, since 2017, Judge Sykes has served in the Riverside County Superior Court Appellate Division where she presides over misdemeanor and limited civil appeals. In 2019, she was appointed to be the Presiding Judge over that division. Judge Sykes has also served on the Riverside County Superior Court's Alternative Dispute Resolution, Executive, and Personnel Committees.

Prior to her appointment as a Superior Court Judge, from 2005 to 2013, Judge Sykes served as a Deputy County Counsel for the Riverside County Office of County Counsel. As a Deputy County Counsel, Judge Sykes handled a variety of matters, including representing the Department of Public Social Services in proceedings concerning abused or neglected children, enforcing subdivision bonds and agreements, assessing risk management cases, and handling Registrar of Voters actions. During her time as a Deputy County Counsel, Judge Sykes also conducted numerous trainings on the Indian Child Welfare Act for judges, attorneys, and social workers throughout California.

From 2003 to 2005, Judge Sykes was a contract attorney with the Juvenile Defense Panel in Riverside County. In that role, she provided direct representation to parents and minors in juvenile dependency and delinquency cases, specializing in cases involving the Indian Child Welfare Act. Before that, from 2001 to 2003, Judge Sykes worked as a staff attorney at California Indian Legal Services where she focused on domestic violence issues in rural and urban Native communities. Additionally, as a staff attorney, she handled Indian Child Welfare Act cases and represented American Indian Tribes in a broad range of matters.

Throughout her career, Judge Sykes has been involved in multiple bar and judges associations and civic organizations, including the California Judicial Council's Tribal Court/State Court Forum and the Riverside County Tribal Alliance for Indian Children and Families. Judge Sykes received her

Bachelor of Arts degree, with Departmental Honors, from Stanford University in 1997, and her Juris Doctor degree from Stanford Law School in 2001.

Judge Sykes is a member of the Navajo Nation and is the first Native American to serve as a federal district judge in California. Judge Sykes fills the vacancy that arose when District Judge James V. Selna assumed senior status in March 2020. Including the appointment of Judge Sykes, the Central District of California has 28 authorized Article III judgeships, four of which are currently unfilled. The Central District of California is comprised of the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo. It serves more than 19.3 million people, nearly half the population of the State of California.

KIRY K. GRAY
DISTRICT COURT EXECUTIVE / CLERK OF COURT