



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 2, 2023

### **Media Contact**

Avi Bernard

[abernard@jcod.lacounty.gov](mailto:abernard@jcod.lacounty.gov)

## **Judge Songhai Armstead (Ret.) Sworn-In as Los Angeles County Justice, Care and Opportunities Department Director**

**LOS ANGELES** - Judge Songhai Armstead (Ret.) was sworn in as inaugural Director of the new Los Angeles County Justice, Care and Opportunities Department (JCOD) at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration today.

Judge Armstead (Ret.) took the oath to serve in her new role in front of the Board of Supervisors, staff and friends and family in attendance.

"I am deeply honored and profoundly humbled that the Board of Supervisors have entrusted me with first the building of and now the leading of the newest department for Los Angeles County," Judge Armstead (Ret.) said. "In partnership with our entire community, our justice partners, our community and faith-based organizations, our dedicated JCOD team, and all of our sister County departments, we will be able to create safer communities while also providing equitable care and opportunities to those most in need."

Judge Armstead (Ret.) was appointed as a Superior Court Judge by Governor Jerry Brown, during which she served for five years before stepping down to lead the County's Office of Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI), which is now part of JCOD.

She has over 20 years of experience in the largest and possibly most complex justice system in the country. Always committed to a human centered approach, during her tenure as a Superior Court Judge, she achieved one of the best records for compliance and reducing recidivism. In her early career as a prosecutor in the Office of the Los Angeles City Attorney, her innovative programs to improve the lives of veterans, the unhoused, and individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders received state and national recognition.

"I supported the creation of the Justice, Care and Opportunities Department because it would streamline our Care First, Jails Last initiatives and strategies. A lot is riding on this new department – with many community members eager to see just, equitable, and inclusive change. To that end, a strong leader is needed who can push forward with a balanced approach. I trust that Songhai Armstead will be the leader we need to follow through on the Board's vision to improve community investment, public safety, and justice," said Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, First District.

"Judge Songhai Armstead has spent her career advocating for alternatives to incarceration and advancing innovative programs to improve the lives of vulnerable populations impacted by our justice system. Her extensive experience and inspiring leadership will support the County in strengthening our Care First vision. I look forward to continuing to work with Judge Armstead and the Department of Justice Care and Opportunities in building a Los Angeles County that allows for all to thrive," said Supervisor Holly Mitchell, Second District.

"The Justice Care and Opportunities Department is charting a bold new path for how LA County prevents justice system involvement and supports re-entry through a care-first approach," said Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, Third District. "The department needs an equally bold leader who will foster relationships with community and create the structure and innovative models required to reimagine our justice system as it stands today. Judge Armstead is wholly embracing this responsibility and today we welcome her and double down on our shared commitment to meet people where they are with services and care."

"With her decades of experience, Judge Songhai Armstead is uniquely qualified to lead this department. She understands how the criminal justice system works – and why it often doesn't – and how we can do a better job preventing recidivism and ultimately making communities safer and stronger, said Supervisor Janice Hahn, Fourth District.

"I am proud to formally welcome Judge Armstead to the County family," said Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Fifth District. "She has a proven track record for reducing recidivism and knows what works. She is also an innovative thinker that

will lead our County's development and implementation of effective programs that balance accountability and rehabilitation. I look forward to seeing her drive change."

### **About the LA County Justice, Care and Opportunities Department**

The goal of the Justice, Care and Opportunities Department is to address inequities in the justice system and reduce the County's over reliance on the incarceration of our justice impacted populations by providing a continuum of care from prevention to reentry. In less than a year since it was founded, the Department has already invested over \$55 million directly into community-based organizations, with hundreds of millions more set aside for the same purpose. Visit [jcod.lacounty.gov](http://jcod.lacounty.gov) for more information.

###

Follow us on social media: @LACJCOD



Questions or comments? Email us at: [jcod@lacounty.gov](mailto:jcod@lacounty.gov)  
Or visit us on the web: [jcod.lacounty.gov](http://jcod.lacounty.gov)

**SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:**  
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Help](#)

You received this email because you subscribed to the *Justice, Care, and Opportunities Department* mailing list to receive notices about the County's new central agency unifying LA County's efforts to serve vulnerable justice-impacted people and communities.

This service is provided to you at no charge by [County of Los Angeles](#).