



Date: February 6, 2023

To: California Association of Legal Document Assistants

From: Amy O’Gorman Jenkins, President
Mary Creasey, Business Manager

RE: Background on Assemblymember Phil Chen

As requested by your Board, this memo is intended to provide background on Assemblymember Phillip “Phil” Chen, who will be authoring the California Association of Legal Document Assistants (CALDA) sponsored legislation to extend the sunset date on the statutes governing Legal Document Assistants (LDA’s) for an additional six years, until January 1, 2030.

Assemblymember Phil Chen (R -Brea) represents the 59th State Assembly District, which encompasses portions of Orange and San Bernardino counties and includes the cities of Anaheim Hills, Brea, Chino, Chino Hills, Fullerton, North Tustin, Orange, Placentia, Villa Park, and Yorba Linda.

Assemblymember Chen graduated from Servite High School in Anaheim and earned his BA in Communications from California State University, Fullerton as well as an MA in Public Administration and a Doctoral of Educational Psychology from the University of Southern California. He also served as an Adjunct Faculty Professor at the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy.

Assemblymember Chen was elected overwhelmingly to the California State Assembly in November of 2016 and was reelected in 2018, 2020, and 2022. Chen first began his career in elected office in November of 2012 as a school board member in the Walnut Valley Unified School District where he helped turn the district’s budget deficit into a budget surplus and established a “rainy-day” fund.

In the California State Assembly, Assemblymember Chen serves as the Vice Chair of the Banking and Finance Committee, and as a member of the Business and Professions, Insurance, Labor and Employment, and Utilities and Energy committees.

In 2019, Assemblymember Chen introduced [AB 1213](#) (Chen), Chapter 128, Statutes of 2019. Sponsored by the CALDA, AB 1213 extended the sunset date on the statutes authorizing and regulating the work of LDAs in California from January 1, 2021, to January 1, 2024. The original authorization for LDAs was conducted on a trial basis and later extended by the legislature in 2002 and 2015. [AB 1698 (Committee on Judiciary) Chapter 1018, Statutes of 2002, and AB 285 (Gallagher), Chapter 295, Statutes Of 2015]

In 2022, Assemblymember Chen introduced a second bill, [AB 1916](#), which would have once again extended the authorizing statutes governing LDA’s for an additional five years, until January 1, 2029.

Unfortunately, that bill was tabled amid concerns raised by then-Assembly Judiciary Committee Chairman Mark Stone that LDAs lack sufficient oversight and accountability provisions in statute aimed at protecting consumers.

Recognizing that AB 1916 would have faced an uphill battle in the Assembly Judiciary Committee, the Assemblymember Chen, working in partnership with CALDA, initiated a series of requests for legal opinions intended to better inform the legislature on how to appropriately regulate LDAs in manner that both protects consumers and preserves the integrity of the profession. While these legal opinions, which were submitted to the California Department of Justice and the United States Department of Justice, are still pending, Assemblymember Chen's understanding of the issues affecting LDAs and his long-standing commitment to the profession makes him an ideal author for CALDA's latest extension bill, which seeks to extend the sunset date until January 1, 2030.