OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY
COUNSEL

ADOPTED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

45 September 15, 2026

EDWARD YEN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

County of Los Angeles

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September 15, 2026

TO: EDWARD YEN
Executive Officer
Board of Supervisors

Attention: Agenda Preparation

FROM: LILIANA CAMPOS
Litigation Cost Manager

RE: **Item for the Board of Supervisors' Agenda**
County Claims Board Recommendation
Robin Ruse Rinehart Barris v. Suzette Guillen, et al.
Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 24VECV05578

Attached is the Agenda entry for the Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation regarding the above-referenced matter. Also attached are the Case Summary and Summary Corrective Action Plan to be made available to the public.

It is requested that this recommendation, Case Summary, and Summary Corrective Action Plan be placed on the Board of Supervisors' agenda.

LC:tf

Attachments

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Board Agenda

MISCELLANEOUS COMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County Claims Board's recommendation: Authorize settlement of the matter entitled Robin Ruse Rinehart Barris v. Suzette Guillen, et al., Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 24VECV05578, in the amount of $750,000, and instruct the Auditor-Controller to draw a warrant to implement this settlement from the Department of Children and Family Services' budget.

This lawsuit arises from alleged injuries Plaintiff sustained in a traffic collision involving a Department of Children and Family Services employee.

CASE SUMMARY

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF LITIGATION

CASE NAME		Robin Ruse Rinehart Barris v. Suzette Guillen, et al
CASE NUMBER		24VECV05578
COURT		Los Angeles Superior Court
DATE FILED		November 12, 2024
COUNTY DEPARTMENT		Department of Children and Family Services
PROPOSED SETTLEMENT AMOUNT	$	750,000
ATTORNEY FOR PLAINTIFF		KELLEY J. LAZAROVITS, ESQ. Gilbert & Stern, LLP
COUNTY COUNSEL ATTORNEY		MELISSA A. MCCAVERTY, ESQ. Deputy County Counsel
NATURE OF CASE		This is an auto-liability lawsuit which arises from an auto v. pedestrian in a crosswalk collision that occurred on January 25, 2023. Plaintiff claims she suffered injuries and damages as a result of the collision. Due to the risks and uncertainties of litigation, a full and final settlement of the case is warranted.
PAID ATTORNEY FEES, TO DATE	$	42,565
PAID COSTS, TO DATE	$	44,277

Case Name: Robin Ruse Rinehart Barris v COLA, et al.

Summary Corrective Action Plan

The intent of this form is to assist departments in writing a corrective action plan summary for attachment to the settlement documents developed for the Board of Supervisors and/or the County of Los Angeles Claims Board. The summary should be a specific overview of the claims/lawsuits identified root causes and corrective actions (status, time frame, and responsible party). This summary does not replace the Corrective Action Plan form. If there is a question related to confidentiality, please consult County Counsel.

Date of incident/event:	January 25, 2023
Briefly provide a description of the incident/event:	The Plaintiff claims to have suffered multiple physical injuries due to being struck by a DCFS employee's vehicle while crossing a crosswalk.

1. Briefly describe the **root cause(s)** of the claim/lawsuit:

On January 25, 2023, the DCFS employee was on their personal cell phone while making a left turn and struck a pedestrian who was walking in a crosswalk.

2. Briefly describe recommended corrective actions:
(Include each corrective action, due date, responsible party, and any disciplinary actions if appropriate)

On or about May 1, 2025, DCFS began requiring all mileage permittees to complete Defensive Driver training biennially. On October 20, 2025, and November 7, 2025, the Department issued memos to all mileage permittees informing them of this new biennial training requirement. The Department reviewed this incident and the DCFS employee was required to attend and has completed the County's Defensive Driver training course.

On April 22, 2025, the County Chief Executive Office released a Safety Bulletin on Distracted Driving. The Department shared this bulletin with its workforce on May 1, 2025.

On February 11, 2016, DCFS' Policy Institute released Management Directive (#16-01) "Use of Cellular Phones" to inform DCFS employees of legal requirements and countywide policies/protocols regarding the use of County-issued and personal cellular phones during the course of their work. The Department will update the Management Directive, include any legislative updates including the "No Touch" California Vehicle Code 23123.5 update, and reissue the renewed version to all staff by the close of 2026.

3. Are the corrective actions addressing department-wide system issues?

☒ Yes – The corrective actions address department-wide system issues.

☐ No – The corrective actions are only applicable to the affected parties.

Name: (Risk Management Coordinator) Veronica Pawlowski	
Signature:	Date: 6/17/2026

Name: (Department Head) Brandon T. Nichols, Director	
Signature:	Date: 07/02/26

Chief Executive Office Risk Management Inspector General USE ONLY

Are the corrective actions applicable to other departments within the County?

- ☒ Yes, the corrective actions potentially have County-wide applicability.
- ☐ No, the corrective actions are applicable only to this department.

Name: (Risk Management Inspector General) Betty Karmirlian	
Signature: Betty Karmirlian	Date: 7/7/26