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Judge puts Davis' suit against districts on ice

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SAN FRANCISCO--A judge ruled Wednesday that Gov. Gray Davis' suit against 18 school districts must be put on hold until the conclusion of an American Civil Liberties Union suit against the state for depriving students in those districts of the "basic educational necessities."

The ACLU sued last May, saying the state ultimately was responsible for unsafe buildings, outdated textbooks, uncredentialed teachers and other substandard conditions in mostly minority schools in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

The Democratic governor, saying the districts were responsible for any deficiencies, countersued them in December, complicating the case and making resolution unlikely for the foreseeable future.

In February, San Francisco Superior Court Judge Peter Busch denied the ACLU's motion to dismiss the countersuit. On Wednesday, Busch separated the two cases and said the ACLU suit will go first.

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