

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION

ROOM 163, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION / 500 WEST TEMPLE / LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012 / 974-1491

May 5, 1982

Joe Crail, Chairperson  
Robert J. Lowe, Vice Chairperson

Honorable Board of Supervisors  
Los Angeles County  
383 Hall of Administration  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Gentlemen:

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Dr. Carolyn L. Ellner  
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Richard Snyder  
Gloria Starr  
Dean Sweeney, Jr.  
Wally Thor-  
Dr. Edward Zalta

STATUS OF ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATIONS ON COURT SYSTEM

On November 10, 1981, the Board of Supervisors adopted our report and fifteen recommendations on the court system. The Board requested our Commission to review implementation progress and report back in six months.

You have already received reports from the Chief Administrative Office (April 2, 1982) and the Los Angeles County Bar Association (April 15, 1982). You have received Minutes and correspondence from the Judicial Procedures Commission. You have received the report of the Superior Court on Court Financing and User Fees and the recommendations of the Executive Committee of Superior Court Judges (April 21, 1982). You have received the legislative reports on the status of implementing legislation. You have received the CAO's budget recommendation.

Rather than repeat all the detail, we here concentrate on our observations of the central situation as we defined it in our report:

--Congestion in the court system is a problem of resources. Taxpayers have limited public financing of the system while the growth of demands on the system continues unabated and the complexity of its social functions increases.

Our fifteen-point program you adopted was designed to relieve pressure at specific points in the system in order to release resources for use elsewhere.

Implementation Status

Three recommendations have been implemented:

- The Board's Blue Ribbon Committee has been dissolved and the Judicial Procedures Commission has been re-constituted.
- The jurisdiction of the arbitration system in Superior Court has been increased and the compensation of arbitration has been increased.
- The Superior Court has implemented pilot case management systems and is cooperating with the CAO in monitoring their effects.

None of the other recommendations have been implemented.

Agency Performance

In adopting our recommendations, the Board of Supervisors requested Bench and Bar and county administrative agencies to assist in implementation planning.

In suggesting collaboration of this kind, we proposed that all involved organizations would:

--Propose and support the steps to be taken to implement recommendations they support.

--Propose and develop alternatives to meet the objectives of recommendations they oppose.

County Agencies

As directed by the Board, County Counsel and the Chief Administrative Office drafted legislation, proposed it and supported it through the legislative process. The Executive Office of the Superior Court, the Chief Administrative Office and the Auditor-Controller have met to establish preliminary requirements for financial information systems, security systems and the other internal operations we recommended changing Judiciary. The Executive Committee of Superior Court Judges decided to oppose our proposal to finance court reporter services with user fee revenue. Instead, the judges propose a general court user fee to finance trial court proceedings starting with the second day of trial.

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Bar

The Los Angeles County Bar Association and the County's Judicial Procedures Commission have focused on determining whether they agree or disagree with our recommendations. They agree with most but consider them too general to support implementation planning. They disagree with our user financing proposal and with our proposal to reduce the size of civil juries. They actively opposed implementing legislation. They have not proposed alternative means to increase court system revenue.

Conclusion

We believe that it is still reasonable to collaborate with the Judiciary on revenue and other improvement programs, considering the financial condition of the State and County. We believe it is questionable to expect any collaborative effort from the local voluntary bar associations. We believe the Judicial Procedures Commission should be encouraged to develop and propose alternative revenue programs for Superior Court.

Recommendation

Direct County Counsel and the Chief Administrative Officer to collaborate with the Superior Court in developing a revenue program and presenting it to the Legislature for passage.

Respectfully,

Joe Crail  
Chairman