

From: Judge Lisa Hart Cole
To: Invitations
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I fully support immediate implementation of the recommendations made by the SEC in their comprehensive report.

I appreciate that the leadership of the AOC may possess unique administrative skills not shared by members of the Judiciary. But Judicial Officers are governed by law to operate under a strict code of ethics which, at its base, obligates us all to put the needs of the public before our own and uphold the law even if it is contrary to our personal beliefs. It makes perfect sense to me, therefore, that the Judicial Council should govern the acts of the AOC rather than the other way around. As such, it is critical that the Judicial Council be an independently and democratically selected body to effectuate the necessary checks and balances.

Judicial Officers at all levels are qualified to synthesize large amounts of information on a wide spectrum of complicated issues outside of our former area of expertise as lawyers. This is the daily work of the Judges and Justices of our Judiciary. In the context of the SEC report, it is worth noting that Presiding Judges for many decades have provided extraordinary administrative leadership, even though they are not professionally trained in management, with the assistance of highly qualified administrators. If this history provides any guidance, there is every reason to feel confident that members of the Judicial Council can and should lead our court system.

It is understandably painful to consider firing employees of the AOC. Our Court, and the bench officers in my Courthouse, understand all too well how difficult it is to see a hard-working employee lose their job. Individuals who are the sole support of their families and who worked for the court for many years have been thrown into a unfriendly job market. Two from our courthouse alone were in their late 50's and had worked for the court for over 10 years. Two others have been forced to drive nearly 80 miles from their homes to their new assignments.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for the findings of the SEC and strongly urge the Judicial Council to do the job they are empowered, and most capable, of doing.

Lisa Hart Cole
Judge, LASC