

From: Judge James K. Hahn
To: Invitations
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As a former chief executive officer of a large government organization, I want to first acknowledge the courage of the Chief Justice to appoint a committee who would give a an honest and unvarnished assessment of the role of the AOC and the Judicial Council over the past several years.

I first became aware of the serious problems regarding the AOC when reports of the quagmire that describes CCMS surfaced in the media. Having had firsthand experience with managing the development of large computer database systems, I couldn't understand why the AOC allowed the consultants to be out of control. When I found out that the AOC took on the task of oversight themselves, with no background or experience, the recipe for disaster was set in motion. The only possible explanation was arrogance.

Unfortunately, arrogance seemed to become the culture at the AOC, and the Judicial Council did not exercise their oversight role effectively in many other instances. The AOC should have been a service oriented organization, not a means of control. At its heart, the core function of the third branch of government is to provide access to justice for the citizens of this state. Forcing trial courts to absorb cuts, which meant layoffs and courtroom closures, while the AOC gave raises to its own employees, shows how far arrogance had permeated the AOC.

I urge adoption of the recommendations in the report that support and enhance the independence and viability of the trial courts in this state, and encourage the AOC to assume its proper and vital role as an entity that serves the courts. We need the Judicial Council to truly represent the wide diversity of opinion among the judges in this state through an open and democratic process in selecting its members.

I want to thank the members of the Committee for their hard work, but more importantly, thank them for speaking the truth. And I want to thank the Chief Justice again for her leadership in appointing such a distinguished panel.

James Hahn,
Judge, Los Angeles County