

To Chief Justice Cantile-Sakauye, Justice Miller, and Members of the Judicial Council:

I have been a superior court judge for almost 10 years. Lacking the historical perspective of the more senior judges, I largely remained on the sidelines when issues regarding the administration of the courts started to be publicly raised. Over time, I have come to appreciate how the role of the Administrative Office of the Courts has changed over the years from a support role, designed to assist in judges being the best they can be, to an organization dictating to the judges and interfering with the performance of their duties. I have also become aware of how the AOC wasted precious resources by pursuing an ill-advised case management program, without controls, so that it became an out-of-control boondoggle and embarrassment to the judicial branch.

The most glaring example of unaccountability and poor judgment is CCMS. When I joined the technology committee of the Los Angeles Superior Court, I was glad to see that the Judicial Branch was working towards the implementation of modern technology, which could make the work of the court more efficient. Unfortunately, my disappointment grew by leaps and bounds as I saw an important endeavor turn into a waste of massive proportions. The huge amount of money that was spent, and which was planned to be spent, on unnecessary goals, was mind-boggling.

While I am sure our court leadership had the best of intentions when court management was centralized, it became clear that what had ultimately resulted was the growth of an unaccountable bureaucracy. After a disturbing attempt to maintain the status quo, action was finally taken due to the groundswell of dissatisfaction among judges. This resulted in the report of the Strategic Evaluation Committee.

This committee is comprised of some of the most distinguished members of the bench. Having watched the presentation of the report to the Judicial Council, I saw that the Judicial Council was made aware that the tone of the report was deliberate, if not understated. The Judicial Council cannot ignore the findings and recommendations without losing the respect of large numbers of judges throughout the state, as well as the respect of the other branches of government.

I have found this entire controversy dismaying. When I became a judge I never anticipated that court management would become the defining issue of our time in

the courts. We need to move past this and spend our time and efforts on our core function, which is to provide access to justice to all the citizens of our state. This can only be accomplished by prompt implementation of the recommendations in the SEC report. Immediate implementation should include recommendations 4-1, 4-2 and 4-3.

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