

July 23, 2012



Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye
Supreme Court of California
350 McAllister Street
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Item SP12-05 Response (SEC Report) / Dependency Court-
Appointed Counsel Program

Roger Chan
Executive Director

Kristin Mateer
Managing Attorney

C. Joy Ricardo
Managing Attorney

Sarah Lusardi
Clinical Director

Carol Barnett
Director of Training

Peggy Stone
Director of Law Interns

Ana Wong
Operations Manager

Dear Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye:

I am the Executive Director of East Bay Children's Law Offices (EBCLO), the nonprofit organization in Alameda County that is contracted to represent children in juvenile dependency court. We were established in 2009 and were awarded the contract to represent children after the county public defender withdrew from the practice. Our mission is to empower the voice of children through vigorous, effective and compassionate legal representation. Our values align with the goals of the DRAFT program to improve attorney performance for California's families in crisis.

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The DRAFT program rightfully recognized the "pervasive nature of the challenges facing the court in securing and funding quality appointed counsel" and addressed key issues: reduction in caseloads and establishing compensation and workload parity, with the overarching objectives of improving judicial, peer and client satisfaction with court-appointed counsel services and improving well-being outcomes for children.

We received valuable assistance and advice from the CFCC staff as we made a seamless transition of the caseload from the public defender to our new organization, and through our operation today. The CFCC attorneys have been key partners in identifying and planning for training needs in our county to help maintain and improve the quality of legal representation. The JCATS software has allowed us to become more efficient in our management of caseloads and use of data to evaluate and improve our performance. Findings from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care have highlighted important needs of children and youth and provided a road map to system improvements. The recent passage of AB 12, "Fostering Connections to Success" Act, has also showcased the important work of CFCC, as the CFCC staff have helped to bring about the uniform implementation of a complex law throughout our state.

The SEC report is a thorough and thoughtful evaluation of the AOC's functioning. I greatly appreciate and applaud your leadership in directly confronting some deeply challenging issues. While I support many of the recommendations for improvement and restructuring identified by the SEC report, I believe the DRAFT program is an area of strength that has benefitted

California's children and families. CFCC has taken the lead and serves an important role in addressing the systemic problems in California's juvenile dependency courts. As you and the Judicial Council make the next difficult choices, I hope that you will ensure that the court-appointed counsel program continues to receiving adequate funding and resources to fulfill its important mission.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Chan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Roger Chan
Executive Director