

From: Judge Abraham Khan
To: Invitations
Subject: Invitation to Comment on Recommendations contained in the SEC Report
Date: Friday, July 20, 2012 6:52:45 PM

To the Chief Justice, the Chair of the Executive and Planning Committee and the Members of the Judicial Council:

I have served the courts for almost 24 years as a Commissioner, Judge, Site Judge, Supervising Judge, and Presiding Judge. I have served on the Boards of the California Judges Association, California Judges Foundation, and that of the Los Angeles County Law Library. I have been active with teaching New Judge Orientation over the years, and with having served on the Continuing Judicial Studies Committee. I also have had the pleasure, over the years, to work with many fine and dedicated staff within the Educational Division of the AOC. During all this time my Oath of Office and dedication to the high standards of our System of Justice has remained the same.

I recall, years ago, that as Presiding Judge, I along with the Court Administrator, and Judges of our court, had to financially negotiate and defend our budgetary needs for the each fiscal year, as we were dependant on court funding from the County of Los Angeles in those days. Things have dramatically changed with the Trial Court Realignment And Efficiency Act, Trial Court Funding, Court Unification, and related Court Legislation over the years. During all this time my Oath of Office, as well as those of my colleagues throughout the State, and our dedication to the high standards of our System of Justice has remained the same.

Over the last few years, when courts throughout the State have been forced to close, reduce hours of service, lay-off dedicated court employees, cut-back on available services to the public, forced to dramatically change the landscape of our Judicial System, and endure the pain that this has brought to our court family, we have had to hear disheartening, critical, and embarrassing accounts of mismanagement, arrogance, and a lack of transparency and accountability on the part of our court leaders and the AOC. While these accounts were dismissed, at first, as misinformed, misunderstood, and misguided, they began to bear substance and vitality with each resignation of high level administrators, critical State Audits, and slowly revealed revelations that appeared to corroborate and substantiate the criticism.

These revelations reflect poorly upon all of us, despite the protestations of those that pretend that "nothing needs fixing." Ultimately, we answer to the electorate, who are taxpayers, and who demand accountability and transparency. We are elected officials, and will be held accountable. Throughout it all our Oath Of Office will not change and neither will our commitment to the high standards of our Judicial System.

We do not currently have a democratic system of self-governance on the Judicial Council, comprised of members who are elected from a broad cross-section of Judges from throughout the State. Nevertheless, whether appointed or elected, the need for swift and decisive action is now urgently required and is unquestionable. Whether appointed or elected, the voices of Judges who are crying out for change needs to be heard and accordingly acted upon.

I urge our Chief Justice, the Chair of the Executive and Planning Committee and the Members of the Judicial Council to implement all of the recommendations of the SEC Report, and to provide ongoing oversight and monitoring to assure progress and compliance. I also concur with and support the "Comments Of The Los Angeles Superior Court In Response To The Judicial Council's Request For Public Comment On The Report And Recommendations Of The Strategic Evaluation Committee", submitted to you on July 19, 2012 by Presiding Judge Lee Smalley Edmon.

I wish to thank our Chief Justice for her leadership and courage in establishing the Strategic Evaluation Committee, and to each member of that committee for the tremendous effort they expended in producing this fine report. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be heard.