

Dean T. Stout
Presiding Judge

Brian J. Lamb
Judge



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The Honorable Tani Cantil-Sakauye
Chief Justice of California and
Chair of the Judicial Council
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Strategic Evaluation Committee (SEC) Report-- Comments

Dear Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye and Members of the Judicial Council:

I begin by stating my utmost respect for the Chief Justice's resolve and commitment in creating the SEC. The fact that the Chief and Judicial Council is providing notice to the public and an opportunity to weigh in on the report and conclusions shows the Judicial Branch's commitment to our stated goals to increase trust and confidence in the justice system both with the public as well as Judicial Branch employees and officers.

I am encouraged by the notion that this report brings greater transparency to the Judicial Council to help them serve and assist the trial courts rather than dictate what will be done. I champion the notions that we move toward a democratically elected Judicial Council, insure transparency in Judicial Council decision making, and that any and all proposals pertaining to the structure, organization, and/or governance of the Judicial Branch be fully disclosed with notice and opportunity for all stakeholders to be heard.

With respect to downsizing the AOC, I am concerned that "we don't throw out the baby with the bath water." As acknowledged by the SEC, certain services provided by the AOC, such as the Human Resources Department (HR) and the Office of the General

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Counsel (OGC), have taken on increasing importance to the smaller rural courts. Two divisions of the AOC that we should be particularly proud of are the Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) and the California Judges Education and Reserach (CJER). The importance and value of these AOC services and divisions must be thoroughly recognized and evaluated before additional cuts are made. The recent recognition of Diane Nunn, Director of CFCC, by the American Bar Association should give us all pause to recognize and consider the tremendous work her division performs. CFCC has already suffered drastic cuts, and the loss of those very talented staff members will be felt for years to come by the courts as well as the children and families we serve. As Co-Chair of the Family & Juvenile Law Advisory Committee (FJLAC), I will be providing joint comments about particular areas of the report related to my work as Co-Chair of the FJLAC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dean T. Stout". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and title.

Dean T. Stout
Presiding Judge