

# Assembly California Legislature



February 24, 2011

Honorable Tani Cantil-Sakauye  
Chief Justice of California  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688

Dear Chief Justice Cantil-Sakauye:

It is an unusual set of circumstances that prompts us to urge you in the strongest terms to replace Administrative Officer William Vickrey. The fact that that we represent a separate branch of government in no way diminishes our duty to give this advice, since Californians rightly believe they have not three governments, but one. Please know we do not make this recommendation lightly. We believe your tenure as Chief Justice and the esteem of California's courts may rely on your willingness to make the pruning necessary to restore trust between the branches, their employees, and the public they serve.

Under Mr. Vickrey's leadership, the projected cost of a statewide court case management system (CCMS) has ballooned from \$260 million in 2004 to \$1.9 billion, and counting, today. The State Auditor's recent report cites project mismanagement, lack of cost-benefit analyses and lack of project oversight as some of the reasons for this skyrocketing price tag. During the course of the system's evolution, the Administrative Office of the Courts, led by Mr. Vickrey, has consistently ignored warnings. In 2004, the Legislative Analyst's Office warned of a lack of planning and oversight. In 2007, the consulting firm providing limited oversight to the development of CCMS detailed significant concerns. Under Mr. Vickrey's oversight, many of these issues remained unresolved for several months.

In December, 2010, a readiness assessment of the early adopter courts (San Diego, San Luis Obispo and Ventura) found that there are significant risks associated to deploying CCMS in these three counties. Despite these risks, Ron Overholt and Steve Nash, who work under the direction of Mr. Vickrey, recommended that the Judicial Council transfer more than \$94 million from other funds for CCMS – funds that could be used for court operations to prevent court closures and shortened hours.

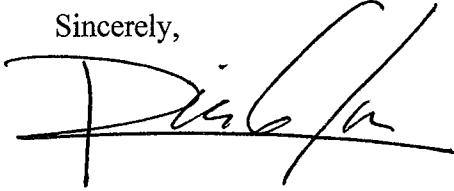
Mr. Vickrey's bewildering dismissal of sound advice has resulted in the kind of debacle that, in any other setting, already would have resulted in termination. The fact that news of his



staggering mismanagement comes during a deep budget crisis only underscores the need for his departure. We hope you will carefully consider this recommendation.

Should you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact Assembly Member Ricardo Lara at (916) 319-2050.

Sincerely,



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RICARDO LARA  
Assembly Member, 50<sup>th</sup> District  
Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee



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BONNIE LOWENTHAL  
Assembly Member, 54<sup>th</sup> District