

**SEIU EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS FOR
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO MARCH 11, 2010 PROPOSALS**

**PROPOSAL 1 - REPLACEMENT OF SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT DEPUTIES WITH LESS COSTLY
SECURITY STAFF**

Response: As you may know, the Court's Cost Reduction Plan contemplates a security cost reduction or savings of up to \$13.0 million. To achieve that objective, court management continues to collaborate with the Sheriff on these and other identifiable cost saving related opportunities. The conversion of deputy positions to 30 Custody Assistant items is a component of that targeted savings objective. However, it's crucial to recognize that \$13.0 million in security savings demands some tremendous modifications in court business operations. While we remain dedicated to reducing security costs, wherever possible, the court cannot dismiss the enormous challenges facing the Sheriff daily in maintaining appropriate officer levels, critical for ensuring the safety and security of the public and court officers/personnel, while considering those cost reductions.

As stated during our March 11, 2010 meeting, deputized personnel are largely used for custody control and where a heightened presence is essential for safety and security reasons. Conversely, the Sheriff generally assigns Custody Assistants and Security Officers to assignments that include low security or custody release. As stated above, court management has and continues to meet with the Sheriff to identify viable options for further reducing security costs. While committed to this objective, doing so cannot be at the risk of compromising deputy safety, or that of the court's judiciary, staff or the public.

Court management does not anticipate achieving any cost savings associated with the merging of County Safety Police with the Sheriff's Department, as the preceding position does not require same qualifications, training, or background of sworn deputies assigned to the Court.

PROPOSAL 2 – ELIMINATE PAYMENT FOR LEGAL NEWSPAPERS

Response: Over the past couple of decades, this court expenditure has been periodically revisited as a potential solution to budgetary insufficiency. A recent reexamination of this court expense has revealed largely the same compelling factors for maintaining current court legal newspaper subscription levels relied on by members of the Court's judiciary and a limited number of court administrators, factors that include:

- The daily legal newspapers afford court judicial officers a way for remaining informed of the ever-changing case law decisions rendered by the Court of Appeals and Supreme Court affecting those litigation matters pending before this trial court. Until such time as those decisions and/or legislative enactments are chaptered statutorily, this is the only effective means of informing our judiciary of vital changes in the law.

**SEIU EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS FOR
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO MARCH 11, 2010 PROPOSALS**

- Los Angeles County is a community of transforming demographics. As this directly impacts the customer base that each courthouse serves, the Court and administration must remain aware of those changes and how that will affect their client base. Unlike other metropolitan papers serving the business arena, legal newspapers provide news specifically affecting the legal environment. Without this vital resource, the court would be unable to fully address the service demands of its community.
- As for shifting the cost for legal newspapers to the end-user, it's vital to recognize that this legal research resource is offered to bench officers, staff attorneys and other staff each day as a resource critical for job performance. Requiring the user to bear the cost of this and other business supplies departs from existing court practice, whether it be to a judicial officer, staff attorney or another class of court employee.

PROPOSAL 3 – CONSOLIDATE LAW BOOKS INTO ONE COURTHOUSE CENTRAL LOCATION

Response: As part of the Fiscal Year 2002-03 budgetary shortfall solution, the Court reduced from then 614 operating law libraries, to the current 339 shared or central libraries design. Under this configuration, a complete set of West's Annotated Codes and California Appellate and Supreme Court Reports are available on shelves in the hallway behind each courtroom for use by a paired group of judicial chambers. All other specialized text needed by Court judicial officers is available within judicial chambers.

To substitute the current shared library design, as the union proposes is deemed impractical and less cost effective for the following and other reasons:

- The court receives vendor provided discounts based on the volume of legal textbooks ordered. As those numbers decline, textbooks cost increases, resulting in higher costs per book and reducing a recoverable savings.
- As found in 2002, some courthouse locations are not able to conform to the proposed central law library design due to building size and structural configuration reasons. Some of those buildings include Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center, Central Civil West, Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, Sylmar Juvenile Court, Santa Monica Courthouse, Central Civil West, and others.
- For large multi-level building like Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center (CJC) and the Stanley Mosk Courthouse (CCH), functioning with one central law library is highly impractical and less efficient.
- Operating with one library per building or floor raises serious safety and security concerns. With only one law library per building or floor, judicial officers and staff

**SEIU EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS FOR
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO MARCH 11, 2010 PROPOSALS**

would need to commute through the public corridors or hallways to access available library facilities. Under this configuration, the court would require a heightened security presence for judicial safety reasons, eliminating any potential savings in the area of courthouse security.

- In large multi-level buildings like the CCH and CJC, serious inefficiencies would result. Specifically, with only one complete set of legal research text available per library, books needed by one judicial officer may not be available because of their use elsewhere, thus delaying the litigation hearing process.

**PROPOSAL 4 – TRANSCRIBE JURY INSTRUCTIONS IN FELONY CASES ONLY WHEN REQUESTED
BY DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL**

Response: As for the above, court management is currently unable to implement this union efficiency proposal for reasons stated in California Rules of Court, Rule 8.320 (c) (4) and (5), "Normal records; exhibits," which state as follows:

"(c) Reporter's transcripts

The reporter's transcript must contain:

(4) All instructions given orally ...

(5) Any oral communication between the court and the jury or any individual juror."

**PROPOSAL 5 - USE E-MAIL TO DISTRIBUTE APPEAL NOTICES, MEMOS, TIME SHEETS, STATUS
UPDATE FORMS, ETC., TO COURT REPORTERS**

Response: You may recall that earlier last month, this efficiency proposal was surfaced with management in a union letter seeking court information. In the court's letter of reply, dated March 4, 2010, management offered the following:

"The cost of access to eForum for court reporters on court-owned PCs would be about \$1.5 million for the first year. This would not include annual ongoing costs. This number reflects the cost of the PCs, network installation and service, and staff support for roughly 500 users, and does not include ongoing costs. Note that access to Court email via GroupWise Webmail is already provided to court reporters. Additionally, a limited number of workstations are already provided and supported for shared use by court reporters in our courthouses..."

**SEIU EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS FOR
LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO MARCH 11, 2010 PROPOSALS**

For the foregoing reason, the court is currently unable to supply the requisite PC equipment essential to achieving this efficiency objective. Conversely, court management has provided reporters with e-mail access via a GroupWise Webmail. Regrettably, few reporters have availed themselves of this technological resource, rendering it unreliable as a solution for distributing the above and other reports needed by reporters.

PROPOSAL 6 – IMPLEMENT GREEN TECHNOLOGY IN ALL LASC COURTHOUSES

Response: As expressed at our meeting, while this measure has merit, it requires the cooperation of multiple building occupants, a process that presents many challenges. It also requires new technology available in most new construction, but not in older building structures. As for using AOC modernization funds to upgrade older buildings, as you have suggested, that is a matter for exploration with the AOC, something that your local union may need to explore given its impact on all 58 county courts.

PROPOSAL 7 – CHARGE DUPLICATION FEES TO OUTSIDE PUBLIC AGENCIES

Response: To the above efficiency proposal, the following provisions within California State Government Code § 6103, currently preclude court management from implementing this union proposed cost savings measure:

“Neither the state nor any county, city, district, or other political subdivision, nor any public officer or body, acting in his or her official capacity on behalf of the state, or any county, city, district, or political subdivision, shall pay or deposit any fee for the filing of any document or paper, for the performance of any official services... This section does not apply ... where a public officer is acting with reference to private assets or obligations that have come under the officer’s jurisdiction by virtue of his or her office, or where it is specifically provided otherwise ...”

To proceed as proposed would require an appropriate legislative amendment to the controlling statutory provisions.