



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY

County of Ventura, State of California

MICHAEL D. BRADBURY
District Attorney

GREGORY D. TOTTEN
Chief Assistant District Attorney

July 7, 1999

The Honorable Charles W. Campbell
Superior Court of California
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
Ventura, California 93009

Re: **Comment on 1998-99 Grand Jury Report Regarding Attorney Salaries**

Dear Judge Campbell:

This letter is submitted pursuant to Penal Code § 933(c) to provide comment on the Grand Jury's report regarding attorney salaries. The Grand Jury made four specific and important recommendations to address serious salary inequities for Ventura County prosecutors and public defenders. These recommendations together with my comments follow:

1. **Recommendation:** Pay parity be immediately granted for all attorneys working for the County Counsel's Office, the Public Defender's Office, and the District Attorney's Office; thus the pay scales, ranges, and classifications need to be the same.

Comment: I concur. Prosecutors in my office are extraordinarily dedicated and routinely work during the evenings and on weekends to effectively prepare and prosecute their cases. Their commitment and hard work directly impact both the safety of this community and the quality of life enjoyed by its citizens. There is simply no good reason to pay these outstanding men and women lower salaries than their counterparts in County Counsel's Office.

2. **Recommendation:** Equality regarding the ability to grant senior attorney positions be the same for the Public Defender's Office, District Attorney's Office, and County Counsel's Office. In other words: no cap be placed on senior attorney positions in the Public Defender's Office and the District Attorney's Office. This should be done immediately.

Comment: I concur. The 20 percent cap on senior attorney appointments in my office imposes an arbitrary limit upon my ability to reward and retain outstanding prosecutors. Today, more than ever before, our success in protecting this community depends upon the



experience and skill of career prosecutors. Over the last decade, law and evidence have become much more complex, and the breadth of our responsibilities have grown substantially. Regrettably, notwithstanding these increased demands, the average experience level of my prosecutors has declined substantially over the last five years. Lifting the 20 percent cap on senior attorney appointments is essential to correcting this imbalance. It is also a just and fair change that would partially rectify the current salary disparity that exists between attorneys in my office and those in County Counsel's Office.

3. **Recommendation:** Comprehensive parity study be done, within the next year, among Ventura County and other southern California counties with the intent of bringing Ventura County up to pay parity with other counties.

Comment: I concur. Indeed, a comprehensive salary comparison conducted by the Criminal Justice Attorneys Association of Ventura County found a dramatic pay disparity between Ventura County criminal justice attorneys and their counterparts in other counties. This disparity ranges from 18.88 percent less to 34 percent less than the average of other comparable metropolitan counties. This injustice must be corrected.

4. **Recommendation:** Immediately make the minimum time of professional legal requirements for senior civil attorney and senior attorney the same.

Comment: I concur. It is neither fair nor just to compensate County Counsel attorneys at a higher rate than equally experienced prosecutors.

With regard to the implementation of the Grand Jury's recommendations, as District Attorney, I strongly support my prosecutors' efforts to obtain a significant upward adjustment in their compensation and benefits package. In this regard, I have repeatedly urged county leadership to correct this injustice and will continue to do so. I greatly appreciate the Grand Jury's objective evaluation and recommendations on this most important issue.

Very truly yours,



MICHAEL D. BRADBURY
District Attorney

MDB:drs

pc: Members, Board of Supervisors
Richard Dean, County Clerk
Lin Koester, Chief Administrative Officer
Foreperson 1998-1999 Grand Jury
Foreperson 1999-2000 Grand Jury
James L. McBride, County Counsel