

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

May 17, 2011

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION for Item 57**

In February 2007, on my motion with Supervisor Yaroslavsky, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors created a new position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who was to be entrusted with the executive powers necessary to oversee the day to day operations of County government. It was our belief that the previous structure of governing – which required every decision large and small to be vetted through the five members of the Board – impeded the speedy resolution of issues and instead fostered micromanaging and interference in day to day operations. With the so-called “strong CEO” approach approved by the Board, County department heads report to the CEO who in turn reports to the Board, thus providing a clear and efficient chain of command and accountability.

There are specific County departments that continue to report directly to the Board of Supervisors, such as the Executive Officer, the Auditor-Controller, the Fire Department and the County Counsel. There is clear rationale for these direct reports to exist. Now a majority of the Board wants to place two additional departments – Children and Family Services and the Probation Department – in this same category, with no evidence to support the notion that Board oversight is better than that of the CEO in this case. To do so at this point would be an impulsive action of the nature we sought to avoid in implementing such a structure in the first place.

**- M O R E -**

MOTION

MOLINA \_\_\_\_\_

RIDLEY-THOMAS \_\_\_\_\_

YAROSLAVSKY \_\_\_\_\_

KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

ANTONOVICH \_\_\_\_\_

I am not yet convinced that replacing department oversight by one boss with five bosses will make things better, and the reasons for doing so seem more punitive than productive.

Under the current structure, bolstering the confidence of the Board as to whether or not these two departments are functioning effectively is the clear charge and direct responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer. If the Board is not confident that this structure is yielding the expected results, then it must be revisited as a whole and not in the piecemeal way being proposed.

The lives of at-risk children under the County's oversight – whether involved in the dependency or juvenile justice systems – must be paramount in our minds. We all share a collective responsibility for their well-being. To use the two departments entrusted with their care as a means to experiment with a new governance structure without proper vetting and discussion, or even as a way to punish administrators as it has been suggested, is a haphazard and dangerous approach.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors hold in abeyance for 45 days the decision to move DCFS and Probation out from under the CEO;

**I, FURTHER, MOVE** that the Board direct their Chiefs of Staff, working in conjunction with the CEO and County Counsel, to develop recommendations to improve the efficiency of the current governance structure and report back within 30 days.

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