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July 2, 2009

Honorable Kim Dunning,
Presiding Judge
Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive
Santa Ana, CA 92702

Subject: Orange County Grand Jury report: "The Guardian of Last Resort"

Dear Judge Dunning:

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, enclosed please find the Orange County Public Administrator – Public Guardian Department's (PA/PG) response to the above referenced FY 2008 – 2009 Grand Jury Report.

I would like to address the process that was followed leading up to the report, provide additional information about the Public Administrator – Public Guardian Department and its business partners and some of the commentary contained in the report.

The Orange County Grand Jury (GJ) Human Services Subcommittee, consisting of Chair Michael Dresser and members Cathey Bertot, Darlene Hibbs, Marilyn Reardon, Ella Nixon and Linda Hudak first met with the PA/PG management team and Supervising Deputy County Counsel Jim Harvey last July. The subcommittee's audit took place between July and December, 2008. During the course of the audit, the members were given a complete tour of the PA/PG facility, had regular access to PA/PG employees for interviews, were given a computer and work space in the PA/PG conference room to conduct case file audits, were taken on a "ride along" with deputies to the field to observe and invited to a property sale. The members requested and received instructions on where to go to see cases handled in the Superior Court and did subsequently visit the Lamoreaux Justice Center and observed the PA/PG court calendar in action.

The Grand Jury subcommittee members received extensive documentation from PA/PG regarding the budget and general information including ending fiscal year balances, current year expenditures, inter-department cost-apply figures, a list of department accomplishments, copies of the Internal Audit Department report from 2005 – 2006, policy and procedure manuals, organizational charts and caseload data. The subcommittee also requested copies of some employee's entire personnel files but were referred to the County of Orange Human Resources Department (HRD) as these documents are all stored electronically at the HRD. All County of Orange departments, by Board of Supervisors directive, converted to paperless personnel document storage several years ago.

