



KAMALA D. HARRIS  
District Attorney

July 30, 2004

Edward Harrington, Controller  
City Hall Room 316  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Re: Response to Controller's Review of the District Attorney's Office Financial Operations and Staff Deployment**

Dear Mr. Harrington:

I want to thank you and your staff for all the fine work you have done researching and preparing your Review of the District Attorney's Office Financial Operations and Staff Deployment. I requested the review as a tool that I can use to guide me in creating a first class District Attorney's Office for San Francisco and your work will be of tremendous value as this effort goes forward.

Your review has highlighted some important areas that need attention and improvements to make this office function better. I could not agree more with your findings in what I believe are the two most critical areas that, as a City, we must address.

First, your review confirmed that our office is significantly understaffed as compared to nearby counties. Your Cross Jurisdictional Comparisons Of Staffing Levels compares staffing in San Francisco, Alameda and Santa Clara counties, each of which handles approximately the same number of felony cases (approximately 9,000 annually). As illustrated by your chart on page 44 and reproduced below, Santa Clara County's District Attorney has more than double the number of lawyers and total staff as San Francisco and Alameda County's office is about one a half times our size.

<b>Total Number of Attorneys, Investigators and Support Staff</b> (numbers represent budgeted positions)			
	<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>Alameda</b>	<b>Santa Clara</b>
Attorneys	110	160	205
Investigators	53 (43 sworn and 10 non-sworn)	94 (all sworn)	104 (97 sworn and 7 non-sworn)
Paralegals	19	4	24
Support Staff (secretarial/clerical)	20	89	117
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>450</b>

As you know, as of May 1, 2004, I redeployed the office's attorney staff and beefed up key units, including homicide and the legal research team. I have created a Public Integrity Unit to ensure appropriate use of public resources by public officials. I am also working to create a Gun Crimes Unit and Child Sexual Assault Unit to address top priorities through the specialized assignment

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of some of our most highly trained and skilled attorneys. I am committed to controlling spending in my department in light of the citywide budget crisis. Unfortunately, we are faced simultaneously with critical public safety challenges and the bottom line is that we must increase the number of attorneys in this office. With budget support from the Mayor and Board of Supervisors, we will be able to fund five vacant attorney positions during this fiscal year and I am optimistic that, over the next several years, we will be able to find the resources necessary to significantly enhance our attorney staffing.

Second, you found that in the area of Technology Systems, this department's current technology capacities are grossly inadequate to meet the needs of a functional law office. We look forward to taking important first steps to enhance technological capacities in this new fiscal year. Staffing our IT unit remains a critical priority that the City was not able to address in this very tight budget year. As you know, a two-person staff simply cannot meet the extensive IT needs of a law office with more than 200 computers, distributed in three physical locations. I plan to raise again our need for IT staff, hardware and software when discussions begin around the 2005-06 budget and I appreciate your detailed analysis of our technology needs and your support for enhancing our resources in this area.

I greatly appreciate your suggestions for long-term improvements as well. This includes your recommendation that we work with the Police Department to transfer the function of prescreening charges. In addition, I share your belief that San Francisco needs to build a new Hall of Justice and I look forward to working with you to make that vision a reality. I strongly support your recommendation that planning for this major capital project should begin now so that the matter can be placed before the voters in November 2005.

As you know, the budget shortfall identified in your review, primarily related to the issue of police court overtime, has been addressed through the 2004-05-budget process and we believe our departmental budget now will be on a sound footing. I thank you for your assistance in addressing that structural budget problem.

On your recommendation, I am looking in detail at a number of specific issues, including:

- Ensuring that staff duties are in line with their job descriptions and that each staff member is working in a position that fits his or her skills and abilities;
- Increasing the number of support staff and ensuring greater support assistance to departmental attorneys to reduce the amount of time that lawyers spend performing tasks that could be better performed by secretaries and paralegals;
- Strengthening our Finance Unit;
- Improving management of the department's vehicle fleet, and;
- Developing a departmental Efficiency Plan and strengthening the office's use of performance measures.

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Again, please accept my deep appreciation for all your hard work and the dedication of your staff, who embraced and met the challenge of this broad and multi-faceted task. The report is extremely thorough and well developed. I am counting on your continued assistance as we go forward to address these issues and to build a professional prosecutor's office that will become a model statewide and across the country. I know you share my conviction that San Francisco deserves no less and my commitment to making it happen.

Yours Very Truly,

Kamala D. Harris  
District Attorney