

BEFORE OFFERING A FEW REMARKS AND OBSERVATIONS THIS MORNING. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK MY COLLEAGUES FOR THE HONOR OF SERVING AS THEIR CHAIRPERSON DURING 1984 AND I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO INTRODUCE MY FAMILY.

IN THINKING ABOUT WHAT TO SAY THIS MORNING, I READ MANY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY OTHER SUPERVISORS UPON ASSUMING THE CHAIR. I FOUND DECENT HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS - SOME GRAND IDEAS, A FEW OF WHICH WERE ACCOMPLISHED - SOME NOT-SO-GRAND IDEAS THAT HAVE MERCIFULLY FADED FROM OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORIES, AND MORE THAN ONE 5 OR 10 POINT PLAN. THIS MORNING I HAVE NO 10 POINT PLAN TO REVEAL - NOT EVEN A 5 OR 3 POINT PLAN. WHAT I DO HAVE, HOWEVER, IS A SENSE ABOUT A NEED TO REBUILD THE PEOPLE'S DAMAGED FAITH IN THE GOOD MOTIVES AND COMPETENCY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL POLITICIANS.

TAX-CUTTING MEASURES DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS ARE A MANIFESTATION OF THIS PROBLEM. WHILE I THINK WE'VE DEALT WITH THE NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS OCCASIONED BY PROPOSITION 13, I HAVE A SENSE THAT WE'VE ONLY FOUGHT HALF THE BATTLE UNLESS WE RECOGNIZE THE FACTORS WHICH BROUGHT IT ABOUT AND ACT ACCORDINGLY.

WHEN I FIRST ASSUMED OFFICE THREE YEARS AGO TODAY, OUR FISCAL SITUATION WAS A DISASTER; THE OUTLOOK FOR COUNTY GOVERNMENT WAS GRIM; MORALE AMONG PUBLIC WORKERS, MANAGERS AND THE PUBLIC WAS AT A HISTORIC LOW. STILL REELING FROM THE IMPACT OF PROPOSITION 13, COUNTY GOVERNMENT HAD NOT FACED THE REALITY OF LIMITED LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES.

SINCE THEN WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH TUMULTUOUS AND TRAUMATIC TIMES. BECAUSE OF THE COMMON SENSE OF THIS BOARD AND WITH THE HELP OF OUR ADMINISTRATION AND EMPLOYEES, WE DID MEET THE CHALLENGE OF POST-PROPOSITION 13 FUNDING. TODAY I CAN PROUDLY SAY THAT THE FISCAL HEALTH OF THE COUNTY IS GOOD. THAT'S NOT BECAUSE WE HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO DO ALL WE WANT TO DO - OR EVEN ENOUGH TO DO WELL WHAT WE NEED TO DO - BUT BECAUSE WE ARE WILLING TO DO ONLY THAT WHICH WE CAN AFFORD.

TO DATE WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DEALT WITH THE FISCAL CONSEQUENCES OF PROPOSITION 13. I'M NOT AS SURE THAT WE HAVE DEALT WITH SOME OF ITS CAUSES.

THE SIZE OF OUR WORK FORCE HAS BEEN STABILIZED. WE'VE MADE SIGNIFICANT CUTS IN OUR EXPENDITURES. WE ARE LIVING WITHIN OUR RESOURCES. WE'RE COMPLYING WITH THOSE DUTIES MANDATED UPON US BY OTHER GOVERNMENT LEVELS OR THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES. WE MAY BELIEVE THAT WE ARE DOING OUR JOBS, AND PERHAPS WE ARE. NEVERTHELESS, CONFIDENCE IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF GOVERNMENT IS LOW.

FROM THE SMALLEST TOWN COUNCIL TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, MOST AMERICANS DON'T HAVE MUCH FAITH IN ELECTED OFFICIALS; DON'T HAVE MUCH FAITH IN THE WORK ETHIC OF PUBLIC EMPLOYEES; DON'T HAVE MUCH CONFIDENCE THAT THEIR TAXES ARE BEING SPENT WISELY; AND PERHAPS AS A CONSEQUENCE, DON'T HAVE MUCH OPTIMISM ABOUT GOVERNMENT OR THE PEOPLE WHO RUN IT.

WE HAVE TO RESTORE THE BELIEF OF LOCAL RESIDENTS IN GOVERNMENT, AND ALSO IN THEIR ABILITY TO SET ITS COURSE. FOR IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, IT IS PEOPLE WHO SOLVE PROBLEMS, AND GOVERNMENT IS SIMPLY ONE OF THEIR TOOLS FOR DOING SO. HISTORICALLY, IT HAS BEEN AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR FOCUSING PUBLIC ENERGY ON PROBLEMS. BUT IT CAN'T BE EFFECTIVE WHILE MANY OF OUR BEST PEOPLE WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

SO, RESTORING FAITH AND CONFIDENCE WILL MAKE OUR SUCCESS IN THE LONG TERM. AND WHILE THIS SOUNDS LIKE AN OVERWHELMING TASK, I BELIEVE THAT THE EFFORT ITSELF IS A MARK OF SUCCESS, FOR THE LACK OF THAT EFFORT IS, IN TRUTH, THE SEED OF THE PROBLEM. TO BE PERSUASIVE, WE MUST BE BELIEVABLE. TO BE BELIEVABLE, WE MUST TELL THE TRUTH--ALL THE TIME.

LAST NOVEMBER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT FAILED TO PERSUADE LOCAL VOTERS THAT A RATHER MODEST TAX INCREASE WAS NECESSARY TO BUILD A BIGGER JAIL. IT IS NOTABLE THAT THERE WAS NO WELL-DEFINED OPPOSITION CAMPAIGN. IN FACT, THE MEASURE WAS SUPPORTED BY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ELEMENTS IN THE COMMUNITY. WHY DID IT FAIL?

I BELIEVE THAT THE DIFFICULTY WAS AT THE THRESHOLD OF PERSUASION--CONVINCING VOTERS THAT THE ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO WERE TRYING TO SELL THE TAX WERE HONEST AND PUBLIC SPIRITED. IS COUNTY GOVERNMENT SQUANDERING TAX MONEY ON SILLY OR UNNECESSARY THINGS? IS IT WASTING MONEY THROUGH INEFFICIENCY? WERE LEADERS TELLING THE TRUTH THAT THERE WAS NOT ENOUGH MONEY TO BUILD THE JAIL UNLESS THE TAX WAS PASSED?

THESE ARE QUESTIONS I'VE HEARD MORE THAN ONCE FROM MY CONSTITUENTS. THEY SAY MORE ABOUT GENERAL PUBLIC ATTITUDES THAN THEY DO ABOUT THIS COUNTY GOVERNMENT. YET SUCH ATTITUDES HAVE TO BE MET AND DEALT WITH BEFORE WE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT CAN BECOME THE EFFECTIVE TOOL OF THE PEOPLE WE WERE MEANT TO BE.

WE HAVE TO RESTORE THE PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT. IN THE LAST DECADE, GOVERNMENT WENT FROM THE AGE OF CAMELOT--WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMED POSSIBLE--TO THE AGE OF WATERGATE--WHEN EVERYTHING WAS SUSPECT. NEITHER APPROACH SERVES US WELL. IN FACT, ALL THINGS ARE NOT POSSIBLE IN GOVERNMENT. MANY PROBLEMS ARE BEYOND THE DESIRABLE SCOPE OF STRENGTH OF GOVERNMENT.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF SUSPECTING EVERY INSTITUTION CAN BE JUST AS DANGEROUS--SAPPING OUR ABILITY TO DEFINE AND PERFORM OUR ROLE, AND DRIVING THE YOUNG AND THE TALENTED AWAY FROM COMMUNITY SERVICE. GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE DIVIDED AGAINST EACH OTHER, LIKE LINCOLN'S HOUSE DIVIDED, CANNOT LONG STAND.

SO I ENTER THIS YEAR AS CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD WITH A NUMBER OF HOPES. FIRST, I BELIEVE WE CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR SOCIETY BY CONTINUING TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT ARE SIMPLY ESSENTIAL TO THOSE IN NEED. MUCH OF WHAT WE DO - FROM CARING FOR CHILDREN WHO'VE BEEN ABUSED OR ABANDONED BY THEIR FAMILIES TO PROVIDING LIFE-SAVING MEDICAL CARE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED - IS ESSENTIAL TO THE NEEDY AS WELL AS THE MORE FORTUNATE. IT IS WE WHO WILL STEP

FORWARD TO MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF THOSE WHO ARE HELPLESS AND ILL. INDEED, THROUGH OUR ACTIONS, SOCIETY DISCHARGES ITS BASIC MORAL OBLIGATION THAT THE ELDERLY SHOULD NOT GO HUNGRY, THAT DISABLED CHILDREN SHOULD BE ABLE TO RECEIVE PHYSICAL THERAPY, OR THAT THOSE SUFFERING MENTAL ILLNESS SHOULD NOT BE ABANDONED TO THE VAGARIES OF STREET LIFE. THESE ARE VITAL MISSIONS WE WILL CONTINUE TO PURSUE.

BUT DOING THIS IS NOT ENOUGH. I KNOW THAT THESE KINDS OF EFFORTS, WHEN KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BY THE PUBLIC, ARE SUPPORTED. WE NEED TO LET THE PEOPLE OF THE COUNTY KNOW WHAT WE ARE DOING, SO THEY CAN UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR TAX DOLLARS ARE BEING SPENT IN DECENT AND RESPONSIBLE WAYS.

MUCH OF OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE NEEDED STABILITY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT WAS DUE TO THE WILLINGNESS OF COUNTY WORKERS TO SHOULDER THEIR SHARE OF NEW BURDENS. SO, TOO, WILL THEY NEED TO HELP TAKE UP THE BURDEN OF REBUILDING CREDIBILITY IN OUR GOVERNMENT.

I READ A LETTER THE OTHER DAY THAT MEANT A LOT TO ME. THE AUTHOR TOLD OF AN IMPOVERISHED NEIGHBOR WHO RECEIVED MEDICAL CARE AT VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER. SHE CALLED THIS NEIGHBOR "MR. POOR" AND CONCLUDED HER LETTER BY SAYING "WHAT A WASTE OF COUNTY MONEY ON A PAUPER, SOME MIGHT SAY. BUT QUITE OFTEN TODAY'S PAUPER WAS YESTERDAY'S PRINCE. MR. POOR WAS A WORLD WAR II VOLUNTEER, A FORMER POLICEMAN AND SKILLED CABINETMAKER. HE PAID HIS DUES TO HIS COUNTRY, IF NOT THE COUNTY. PERHAPS THE VMC PEOPLE SUSPECT - AS I DO - THAT THERE ARE MANY MORE MR. POORS IN THEIR WARDS - FORMER TEACHERS, EXECUTIVES AND MINISTERS. OR PERHAPS THEY JUST BELIEVE IN TREATING EVERYBODY WITH COURTESY AND DIGNITY. IN EITHER CASE, I AM PROUD OF THEM."

WHEN I READ THAT LETTER, I WAS PROUD OF OUR HOSPITAL WORKERS. I BELIEVE MANY, MANY IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT DO TREAT EVERYONE WITH COURTESY AND DIGNITY. BUT I HAVE ANOTHER HOPE FOR THIS YEAR AND IT IS THAT EVERY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC WHO HAS CONTACT WITH COUNTY GOVERNMENT LEAVES WITH THE FEELING THAT HE OR SHE HAS RECEIVED GREAT RESPECT AND COURTESY. IT MAY BE THAT IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY THE CUSTOMER DOES NOT ALWAYS COME FIRST - BUT IF GOVERNMENT IS TO REBUILD CREDIBILITY, WE MUST HOLD OURSELVES TO A HIGHER STANDARD.

AS THE SPENDERS OF THE PUBLIC'S MONEY AND CUSTODIANS OF THE PUBLIC TRUST, COUNTY WORKERS PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN THE FORMULATION OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT. TO THE PUBLIC WHO CALLS NEEDING HELP, YOU ARE THE GOVERNMENT - AND WE COUNT ON YOU TO BE CAREFUL TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC'S FAITH.

ONE OF THE THINGS THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DID IN REACTION TO PROPOSITION 13 WAS TO PUT SOME COUNTY SERVICES ON A "COST-RECOVERY" BASIS. THE THEORY IS FINE - LET BENEFICIARIES OF COUNTY SERVICES PAY FOR THEM. BUT IN PRACTICE THE THEORY FAILS. GOVERNMENT HAS A MONOPOLY ON SOME OF THESE SERVICES - AND IN FACT WHAT WE PROVIDE IS NOT ALWAYS PERCEIVED AS A SERVICE, BUT AS A BURDENSOME REGULATION OR NEEDLESS LICENSING. ANOTHER RESULT HAS BEEN TO ENCOURAGE, WITHOUT INTENDING IT, OUR WORKERS TO DO THOSE TASKS WHICH "MAKE MONEY" INSTEAD OF THOSE THINGS THAT NEED TO BE DONE FOR THE RIGHT

REASONS. GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE BUSINESSLIKE - BUT IT IS NOT A BUSINESS. BY NECESSITY SOME OF WHAT WE DO SHOULD BE TO SERVE THE PUBLIC AT LARGE - AND, OF COURSE, THE PUBLIC HAS PAID FOR SERVICES THROUGH THEIR TAX DOLLARS. I HOPE THIS YEAR WE'LL TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE RESULT OF COST RECOVERY OPERATIONS.

I HOPE ALSO TO FOSTER NEW WAYS TO ENCOURAGE A CARING AND RESPONSIVE ATTITUDE IN EVERY AREA OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT. PLATO SAID: WHAT IS HONORED IN A COUNTRY WILL BE CULTIVATED THERE. AS CHAIRPERSON, I WANT TO ESTABLISH METHODS TO HONOR THOSE WHO, LIKE VMC STAFF WHO CARED FOR MR. POOR, BRING HONOR UPON THEMSELVES AND THE PUBLIC THROUGH THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR DUTIES. I DON'T HAVE A 10 POINT PLAN FOR THIS - AND I DON'T WANT TO PROPOSE A NEW COUNTY PROGRAM - BUT I WOULD LIKE TO HEED PLATO'S ADVICE. I CARE ENOUGH ABOUT IT THAT I'VE DECIDED TO TAKE \$100 A MONTH OUT OF MY OWN SALARY TO GIVE A MONTHLY AWARD TO A COUNTY EMPLOYEE WHO EMBODIES THE ESSENCE OF SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC. I HOPE THAT MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO RECEIVE GOOD SERVICE, WORKERS WHO SEE A COLLEAGUE GO THE EXTRA MILE TO HELP SOME ONE - OR ANYONE ELSE WHO SEES SOMEONE WHO IS EXCELLENT WILL LET ME KNOW. I'LL BE HONORING SOMEONE EVERY MONTH.

THERE ARE A FEW THINGS MORE THE BOARD CAN DO TO HELP RESTORE PUBLIC PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR GOVERNMENT. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SPEND MONEY SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS AVAILABLE. WE CAN'T ATTEMPT TO SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM BROUGHT BEFORE US OR TO MEET PROBLEMS WITH A CHECKBOOK MENTALITY. GOVERNMENT SOMETIMES RESPONDS TO THE SPOTLIGHT LIKE AN ACTOR ON THE STAGE. BUT AN AUDIENCE CAN LEAVE A PERFORMANCE THEY DON'T LIKE - IN GOVERNMENT WE MUST LIVE WITH THE RESULTS. WE CAN'T PERFORM WHAT THE AUDIENCE WANTS IN EVERY SCENE, BUT MUST REMEMBER THE ENTIRETY OF THE PLAY. ELECTED PERSONS - LOCAL, STATE OR NATIONAL - HAVE A TENDENCY TO GO OVERBOARD AND OVERBROAD - AT TIMES. I THINK THIS BOARD HAS WORKED TOGETHER TO FIND HUMANE AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS TO SOMETIMES COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. I SUSPECT WE CAN GO A LONG WAYS TOWARDS REBUILDING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IF OUR GOVERNMENTAL RESPONSES TO PROBLEMS ARE MEASURED AND PRUDENT ONES - IF OUR PATCH IS COMMENSURATE WITH THE HOLE.

WE MUST BE TRUTHFUL ABOUT OUR ABILITY TO PROVIDE SERVICES WITHIN OUR RESOURCES. EASIER THOUGH IT MAY BE TO RESPOND TO THE PROBLEM OF THE MOMENT, THE CRISIS OF THE DAY - WE HAVE TO THINK OF THE LASTING IMPACT OF WHAT WE DO. RATHER THAN REACTING TO PROBLEMS BEFORE US, WE MUST BE PROACTIVE IN ARTICULATING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF OUR COUNTY AND IN STRIVING FOR METHODS THAT ALLOW THEM TO BE MET.

I THINK WE'VE DONE A LOT OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, BUT WE CAN DO MORE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE'VE TAKEN MEASURES TO BE RESPONSIBLE TO THE NEEDS OF THE UNEMPLOYED IN OUR COMMUNITY AND TO FOSTER A BUSINESS CLIMATE THAT IS HEALTHY. BUT WE CAN'T LEAVE THE PROMOTION OF A VIABLE LOCAL ECONOMY TO OTHERS OR TO FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS. THAT AUSTIN, TEXAS SHOULD HAVE BEEN SELECTED AS THE SITE FOR ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING NEW HIGH TECH DEVELOPMENTS IN RECENT YEARS, WITHOUT THIS BOARD HAVING PLAYED A LARGE AND ACTIVE ROLE IN THE PROMOTION OF OUR REGION, IS ASTOUNDING TO ME. TO SOME EXTENT, COUNTY

GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SO BUSY GAINING INTERNAL STABILITY THAT WE'VE DONE LESS THAN WE COULD EXTERNALLY. AS CHAIRPERSON, I'LL TRY TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE - HERE, IN SACRAMENTO, IN BOARD ROOMS OR NEIGHBORHOODS, TO PRESS FOR ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR REGION. AT THIS POINT, THE COUNTY MUST TAKE UP THIS BURDEN OR WE MUST RECONCILE OURSELVES TO LOSING IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR REGION AND PEOPLE.

SOME SAY A RISING TIDE LIFTS ALL BOATS. IN THE TIDES OF PUBLIC FORTUNE AND FAVOR, THE GOVERNMENT BOATS ARE VIRTUALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM EACH OTHER. WHEN VARIOUS GOVERNMENTAL JURISDICTIONS FAIL TO COOPERATE FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF THE POEPL, WE SERVE NO ONE, AND WE FOOL NO ONE.

THE COUNTY CAN PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING GOVERNMENTS TO WORK SENSIBLY TOGETHER. DOES IT MAKE SENSE FOR THE PUBLIC TO SPEND MILLIONS IN MASSIVE DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS, WHILE THE OVERCONCENTRATION OF SOCIAL ILLS IN THAT SAME AREA ARE NEGLECTED? WHEN THE STATE LEGISLATURE PASSES HARSHER CRIMINAL PENALTIES, DOESN'T IT MAKE SENSE THAT ENOUGH JAILS, PROSECUTORS AND JUDGES SHOULD ALSO BE PROVIDED SO THOSE LAWS CAN BE IMPLEMENTED? WHEN A CITY PLANS TO ADD HUNDREDS OF POLICE OFFICERS, CAN THE PUBLIC REALLY BE SERVED IF THE PROPER SANCTIONS CANNOT BE IMPOSED BECAUSE WE LACK JAIL SPACE? I'M NOT SAYING THAT THE CRIMINAL LAWS SHOULD BE LENIENT OR THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT SHOULD NOT BE INCREASED - BUT THAT THE ACTIONS OF VARIOUS GOVERNMENTS ARE INTERRELATED IN WAYS THAT CANNOT BE IGNORED. THE TIDE RISES, ALL THE BOATS GO WITH IT, AND THE PUBLIC IS RIGHTLY NOT AS INTERESTED IN THE FINE DISTINCTIONS OF WHAT A CITY OR COUNTY OR STATE DID AS IN THE NET RESULT. WE'RE IN THE STONE AGE WHEN IT COMES TO COORDINATING OUR APPROACHES TO PROBLEMS AMONG THE LOCALITIES. IF I HAVE ANOTHER HOPE THIS YEAR IT IS THAT WE CAN IMPROVE THIS SIGNIFICANTLY. TO REGAIN PUBLIC TRUST WE MUST DO SO.

I'VE BEEN INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT - AND POLITICAL LIFE - ALL MY LIFE. MY MOTHER IS HERE THIS MORNING AND SHE MAY RECALL THAT WE WALKED TO THE HOMES OF OUR NEIGHBORS AS VOLUNTEERS FOR VARIOUS POLITICAL CANDIDATES YEARS AGO. I KNOW I REMEMBER THOSE EFFORTS. I WORKED TO HELP ELECT JOHN F. KENNEDY AND WAS INSPRIRED, AT THE TIME, BY HIS ABILITY TO MAKE ME AND THE REST OF THE NATION BELIEVE THAT WE WERE ACTUALLY BETTER - SMARTER, MORE CAPABLE AND WITH A BRIGHTER FUTURE THAN WE HAD THOUGHT.

THROUGHOUT THE LAST DECADES I'VE BELIEVED AND STILL BELIEVE THAT SO MUCH DEPENDS ON WHAT PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO WANT. I'VE LEARNED THAT IT IS EASY FOR DISILLUSIONED PEOPLE TO FEAR THEIR OWN IDEALS, BUT I STILL KNOW THAT WE ARE A VERY WEALTHY COUNTRY AND COUNTY - FROM OUR MATERIAL WEALTH TO OUR ETHICAL VALUES. I HAVE FAITH THAT SO MANY THINGS CAN BE MADE MORE SENSIBLE AND SIMPLE - THAT THIS CAN HAPPEN IF ELECTED PEOPLE WILL REFLECT THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE - AND IF PEOPLE WILL JUST DARE TO HAVE GREAT HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS. IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET - A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP. I ASK ALL OF YOU TO JOIN ME IN MOVING TOWARD A GOVERNMENT WORTHY OF THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR PEOPLE.

AF B&C  
Sup Bd of  
General

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENTS  
SUPERVISOR ZOE LOFGREN