



inal appeals as necessary.

-The ADA should be limited to legal representation of indigents convicted of felonies; it should not engage in legislative advocacy or educational efforts on behalf of incarcerated individuals.

-Pending the institution of the ADA, OSPD should continue to develop, implement, and enforce its workload standards.

-The current OSPD and the new ADA should increase their law clerk programs to expose more law students to the work and identify potential staff candidates.

-The current OSPD and the new ADA should implement a comprehensive timekeeping and docketing system.

-The ADA should collect, maintain, and annually report to the Judicial Council cost information relating to indigent criminal appellate defense; and the Judicial Council should periodically perform detailed cost efficiency studies of the ADA and its functions.

## DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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In addition to its functions relating to its forty boards, bureaus and commissions, the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) is charged with the responsibility of carrying out the provisions of the Consumer Affairs Act of 1970. In this regard, the Department educates consumers, assists them in complaint mediation, advocates their interests in the legislature, and represents them before the state's administrative agencies and courts.

### MAJOR PROJECTS:

*Small Claims Court Support Program.* In conjunction with the Department's ongoing function to act as a legal resource on small claims court procedures (see CRLR Vol. 8, No. 3 (Summer 1988) pp. 39-40), DCA has recently published a source book for judges and officials in small claims court entitled *Resolving Disputes: Source Book for Small Claims Court Judicial Officers*. The 354-page source book complements the training provided to small claims court judges by Mary-Alice Coleman, Executive Officer of the Dispute Resolution Advisory Council and legal counsel for DCA.

*Dispute Resolution Program.* This DCA-sponsored program consists of a network of informal and affordable county-based mediation centers through-

out the state, based on the idea that an impartial mediator can often help adversaries reach a mutually satisfactory settlement. It is hoped that the program will defuse many disagreements which might otherwise end up in an already crowded state court system. (See CRLR Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 1988) p. 33 for background information.)

On December 2 in Sacramento, the Dispute Resolution Advisory Council was scheduled to hold a public hearing on proposed regulations which would establish funding and operating procedures for the statewide local dispute resolution programs. The proposed regulations include provisions which would require grantees to promote their services by educating the public and other potential referral agencies about dispute resolution processes; set forth standards for allocating and disbursing grant funds; and require counties to establish an interest-bearing account into which all revenues generated pursuant to the Dispute Resolution Programs Act would be deposited.

The December 2 hearing was the final meeting of the Dispute Resolution Advisory Council, which is to be dissolved under sunset provisions included in the Dispute Resolution Programs Act. The DCA is now responsible for overseeing the statewide local dispute resolution programs.

*Public Relations and Publications.* A new DCA public outreach program airs twice a month on KEZR-FM in San Jose. The radio broadcast is entitled "Sunday Morning Magazine", and includes invited guests who speak on consumer-related issues and problems. The broadcast reaches two million residents and is heard from Los Gatos to Daly City.

DCA's *Consumer Connection* newsletter is expanding to include federal and state legislation and court decisions which influence California consumer issues, as well as the decisions of federal regulatory bodies.

Two new brochures published by DCA are available free of charge. *California Consumers* is a brochure which identifies the responsibilities of the Department and suggests direction for consumers with specific problems or questions. *From Credit Despair to Credit Repair* is a ten-page booklet outlining the steps a consumer should take to repair credit after experiencing financial difficulty. The booklet also informs consumers of their legal rights in the credit area and explains why credit service agencies often cannot help consumers repair a poor credit record.

## ASSEMBLY OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Established in 1966, the Assembly Office of Research (AOR) brings together legislators, scholars, research experts and interested parties from within and outside the legislature to conduct extensive studies regarding problems facing the state.

Under the direction of the Assembly's bipartisan Committee on Policy Research, AOR investigates current state issues and publishes reports which include long-term policy recommendations. Such investigative projects often result in legislative action, usually in the form of bills.

AOR also processes research requests from Assemblymembers. Results of these short-term research projects are confidential unless the requesting legislators authorize their release.

### MAJOR PROJECTS:

According to AOR, no new reports are ready for publication at this writing.

## SENATE OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Established and directed by the Senate Committee on Rules, the Senate Office of Research (SOR) serves as the bipartisan, strategic research and planning unit for the Senate. SOR produces major policy reports, issue briefs, background information on legislation and, occasionally, sponsors symposia and conferences.

Any Senator or Senate committee may request SOR's research, briefing and consulting services. Resulting reports are not always released to the public.

### MAJOR PROJECTS:

*We Believe in the Future: Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting in California* (undated). According to this 1988 SOR publication, "California leads the nation in both the total number of births to teenagers and the percentage [of] births to teenagers." More than 10% of all births in California are to teenage women. In 1986, 51,817 babies were born to Californians aged 15 through 19, and 901 babies were born to girls aged 14 or younger. The counties of Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange, San Bernardino,