2007-2008 San Bernardino County Grand Jury Report Full of Misinformation and Untruths

The San Bernardino County Grand Jury released a report regarding the welfare system and the fraud unit of San Bernardino County. The report can be viewed at *http://www.sbcounty.gov/grandjury/reports.asp*.

The San Bernardino County Grand jury report about Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards states "Photographs on the card are not required. When asked why not, it was stated that "retailers are not police; they wouldn't ask to see the picture anyway..." The San Bernardino Grand Jury was given wrong information. The reason that the EBT card does not have a picture is that federal and state law does not require that the EBT card have a picture.

The Grand jury was also told "The state requires assistance applicants to be fingerprinted within one year. The PID tries to fingerprint them within a month, before benefits are given." This is a false statement. PID being San Bernardino County Public Integrity Department has to fingerprint all adult applicants before any aid issued.

State law provides that an application cannot be approved unless the adult members of the assistance unit have been fingerprinted.

Welfare and Institutions Code §10830(b)(2) "A person subject to the requirements of paragraph (1) shall not be eligible for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program or the Food Stamp Program until fingerprint images are provided..."

It appears these facts were withheld from the Grand Jury by representatives of the San Bernardino County Program Integrity Department.

The Grand Jury report recommends that County Counsel look into "asset forfeiture" regarding properties purchased with illegally obtained welfare money. The only property that most welfare recipients have accused of welfare fraud is food in the bellies of their kids. Welfare grants are the same as they were 20 years ago and kids need to eat. Maybe the San Bernardino Grand Jury can find a way to take food out of the mouth of babies and kids as "asset forfeiture."

The grand jury also recommended that SIU be transferred to the District Attorney's office without even telling the taxpayers of San Bernardino County's SIU accomplishes. During April of 2008 San Bernardino's own numbers reveal:

SIU Referrals Accepted 2,721
SIU Referral Rejected   0
Convictions   28
Less than 1% success Rate

This is consistent with what is happening statewide. During April of 2008:

SIU Referrals Accepted 33,200
SIU Referral Rejected   1,569
Convictions   354

Welfare fraud is not a problem as the low conviction rate reveals. The real problem is the waste of taxpayer dollars because 99% of the cases referred to SIU did not involve fraud costing taxpayers millions of wasted dollars that could have been used to feed and house needy families rather than feeding the welfare fraud bureaucracy.

California 08-09 Budget Fact

Money Available for CalWORKs $6.6 Billion
Money Used for CalWORKs Recipients $5.2 billion
Money Ripped Off From CalWORKs **$1.4 billion** That is Not Used for Impoverished Families of California.

Vince Toolan Jr. passed away July 1, 2008

Long time DSS employee Vince Toolan passed away July 1, 2008 from complications of diabetes. He was only 55 years old. Vince worked for the DSS Eligibility Bureau since the 80s, until he moved to Community Care Licensing. Although staying in the background, Vince was an integral part of lawsuits in both the litigation and settlement stage. He might be in the courtroom on the day of trial. He ensured that the terms of settlement were feasible. Vince was a man of his word--if he said something would get done--it would.

Vince was the type of person that the world really needs. Patient, honorable and, most of all, a good friend. Vince, we will miss you.