

Enter search keyword

SEARCH

NEWSLETTER

Receive our FREE weekly newsletter [click here](#)

LNL MOST POPULAR ARTICLES

- + Trial lawyers upset with proposed med-mal reform
- + Madigan sues marketing firm over customer lists
- + Judge strikes down ObamaCare in 'difficult decision'
- + New Ala. AG fires private firms handling BP case
- + Caldwell, Hood voice gripes in oil spill situation

LNL HOT TOPICS

- + Asbestos
- + Big Pharma
- + BP Oil Spill
- + Class Action
- + Dickie Scruggs
- + Financial Crisis
- + Global Warming
- + Hurricane Katrina
- + Lead Paint
- + Sub-Prime Mortgages
- + Tobacco
- + Tort Reform

State Supreme Courts

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 02, 2011 3:44:00 PM

Mich. bar calls court system 'outdated'

BY JESSICA M. KARMASEK

LANSING, Mich. (Legal Newsline) - A Michigan judicial task force has issued a report making several recommendations for the state's "outdated" court system, including how to cut costs and streamline its operations.

The State Bar of Michigan's Judicial Crossroads Task Force, in its 23-page report released Jan. 26, focused on court structure and resources, technology, business impact, and access to justice.

The report was written for lawmakers and the state Supreme Court so they will consider making changes to the current system.

The task force, itself, is composed of 29 leaders of the bar, business, civic and political communities.

"The Judicial Crossroads Task Force was born of a recognition that the landscape for Michigan's justice system is changing in perilous ways," it explained.

"The state's fiscal situation has been dire and the horizon for substantial recovery is uncertain. For the past decade, our judges, prosecutors, and the bar have been struggling to deliver justice in the face of diminishing resources and rising needs. Their efforts have been surprisingly successful in delivering significant cost savings while preserving essential services. But more and more, they are finding that the fundamental services they are constitutionally bound to deliver are at risk."

The work of justice, the task force says, doesn't exist in a vacuum.

"We do not need radical change, but we need to do difficult things urgently and purposefully," it said.

The task force points to three "essential" elements: Streamlining the state's trial courts and foster cost-saving collaboration; harnessing technology to meet "urgent and emerging" needs more cost-effectively; and fixing fundamental problems before they grow worse.

In streamlining the trial courts and therefore hopefully saving money, the task force recommended the following, among others:

- Create a statewide council of trial court leaders to "steer the course for change";
- Use a Justice Advisory Board to create constructive links to all key stakeholders inside and outside the justice system and to plan, coordinate and evaluate justice initiatives throughout the state;
- Base the number of judges in each trial court on accepted and reliable data for achieving savings from potential reductions in judgeships;



Young

IN THE SPOTLIGHT:

Tuesday, February 01, 2011

[AAJ convention coming to Miami](#)

MIAMI (Legal Newsline) - Trial lawyers from across the country will be descending on Miami for five days as part of the American Association for Justice Winter Convention. [Read more...](#)



- + [D.C. court tosses former Congressman's lawsuit - 1/25](#)
- + [Philly is No. 1 'judicial hellhole,' group says - 12/14](#)
- + [Asbestos defendants want automatic access to info in bankruptcy trusts - 12/13](#)
- + [AGs, governors and Boehner among amici in health care challenge - 11/30](#)
- + [Toxicogenomics could lead to explosion of litigation, says expert - 11/17](#)

BROWSE BY STATE:

GO

BROWSE BY AG:

GO

BROWSE BY DATE:

GO

LATEST LNL BLOG ENTRIES:

- + [Yoder: W.Va. courts impact jobs](#)
- + [Abbott: Beware Dietary Supplement Scams and 'Miracle' Health Claims](#)
- + [Abbott's signs of a scam](#)

NEWS WIDGET:

Attention bloggers:
Add Record Headlines to your site!

LegalNewsline.com

News from LegalNewsline:

[Travel companies agree to five-year ban in New Jersey](#)

[Calif. AG settles with former Countrywide executives](#)

- Take advantage of both the experience and the impending retirements of "baby boomer" judges to make the transition to the streamlined trial court system successful;
- Use the successful techniques of so-called "problem-solving courts" to provide better service and save taxpayer dollars;
- Test and implement methods of improving the resolution of business disputes; and
- Improve public access to fair resolution of tax disputes.

Upgrading technology throughout the court system, the task force says, would create a "functionally unified" information system and consistent data for better planning, efficiency and future savings -- and for greater accountability, public trust and convenience.

To fix the court system's fundamental problems, the task force suggested, among others:

- Creating and enforcing statewide standards and state responsibility for the delivery of legal services to indigent criminal defendants to reduce errors and costs;
- Creating a reliable central website of user-friendly, up-to-date resources combined with local self-help centers for people seeking self guided information on how to resolve or prevent legal problems;
- Establishing and enforcing statewide standards for the imposition of reasonable fees, fines and costs, based on reliable statewide data; and
- Increasing and improving training in child welfare issues.

Even more specifically, the report calls for consolidating dockets, making trial court judge salaries and health benefits uniform, and creating a pilot business docket in the Wayne and Oakland circuit courts.

In a statement last week, Michigan Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr., said of the report:

"The State Bar's 'Judicial Crossroads' task force has produced a thoughtful and detailed report that merits serious consideration. I thank the task force for their efforts," he said.

"As the report notes, some of our state courts simply have more judges than they need to keep up with their workload; also, many of our courts could benefit from consolidating some functions with other courts in the same judicial circuit. The Supreme Court has long urged the right-sizing of our court system and appropriate court consolidation.

"As chief justice, I very much appreciate having the State Bar's support for these measures as I continue to advocate for them," he added.

From Legal Newsline: Reach Jessica Karmasek by e-mail at jessica@legalnewsline.com.

Filed Under: [State Supreme Courts](#)

[Technorati Links](#)

[Ind. AG wants former sheriff to pay up](#)

[Mich. bar calls court system 'outdated'](#)

[Miss. SC revives legal malpractice lawsuit](#)

[More News...](#)

fast + free- [click here](#)

COMMENTS ON THIS ARTICLE:

No comments have been posted in the last 15 days!

SEND US YOUR COMMENTS ON THIS ARTICLE:

* - Required fields

Subject: *

Message: *

Contact Name: *

Contact URL:

Contact Email: *



Write the characters in the image above:

[E-mail this article to a friend](#) | [Printer friendly format](#)

MORE NEWS HEADLINES:

- + [Mich. bar calls court system 'outdated' - 2/2](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Miss. SC revives legal malpractice lawsuit - 2/2](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [R.I. SC rules for boy injured in pickup football game - 2/1](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Minn. farmers can seek compensation for shocked cows - 2/1](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Texas SC ruling protects government doctors in malpractice claims - 2/1](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [HealthSouth founder loses \\$2.9B appeal - 1/31](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Pa. SC holds company's successor liable - 1/27](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Calif. SC upholds firefighter layoffs - 1/26](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Ariz. courts have no jurisdiction over Calif. defendants - 1/26](#) [READ MORE](#)
- + [Ill. SC puts Emanuel back on ballot while deciding candidacy - 1/25](#) [READ MORE](#)