

# Thomas F. Coleman

October 19, 2015

Dear Chief Justice:

I am writing to you because the issues raised in the letter I sent today to PVP attorneys in Los Angeles have statewide implications for the judicial branch.

Access to justice for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in limited conservatorship proceedings involve federal and state constitutional and statutory mandates.

Complaints about the inadequate performance of court-appointed attorneys in such proceedings have been brought to your attention on several occasions in the past two years.

Unlike the open, transparent, and collaborate approach used by the judiciary in a dozen other states where "WINGS" projects are underway, the response of the Judicial Council of California has been slow, secret, and completely internal. The public has been excluded from meetings of the Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee when these issues have been discussed. The staff member of the Center for Judicial Education and Research told me not to communicate with members of that committee because the committee does not accept input from outside sources.

The signal sent by these actions is disturbing. I encourage you to open the process up to community collaboration and to make these issues a higher priority for the judicial branch.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thomas F. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.