GAO: 24, 25

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97TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2407

To aid State and local governments in strengthening and improving their judicial systems through the creation of a State Justice Institute.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 10, 1981

Mr. KASTENMEIER (for himself, Mr. RODINO, Mr. SAM B. HALL, JR., Mr. OBERSTAR, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. RAILSBACK, Mr. FISH, Mr. HAMMERSCHMIDT, and Mr. BETHUNE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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A BILL

To aid State and local governments in strengthening and improving their judicial systems through the creation of a State Justice Institute.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "State Justice Institute Act of 1981".

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 2. As used in this Act, the term—

(1) "Board" means the Board of Directors of the State Justice Institute;

(2) "Director" means the Executive Director of the State Justice Institute;

(3) "Governor" means the Chief Executive Officer of a State;

(4) "Institute" means the State Justice Institute established under section 3 of this Act;

(5) "recipient" means any grantee, contractor, or recipient of financial assistance under this Act;

(6) "State" means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and any other territory or possession of the United States; and

(7) "Supreme Court" means the highest appellate court within a State unless, for the purposes of this Act, a constitutionally or legislatively established judicial council acts in place of that court.

ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTE; DUTIES

SEC. 3. (a)(1) There is hereby established a private nonprofit corporation which shall be known as the State Justice Institute. The purpose of the Institute shall be to further the

development and adoption of improved judicial administration in State courts in the United States.

(2) The Institute may be incorporated in any State, pursuant to section 4(a)(5) of this Act. To the extent consistent with the provisions of this Act, the Institute may exercise the powers conferred upon a nonprofit corporation by the laws of the State in which it is incorporated.

(b) The Institute shall—

(1) direct a national program of assistance designed to assure each person ready access to a fair and effective system of justice by providing funds to—

(A) State courts;

(B) national organizations which support and are supported by State courts; and

(C) any other nonprofit organization that will support and achieve the purposes of this Act;

(2) foster coordination and cooperation with the Federal judiciary in areas of mutual concern;

(3) make recommendations concerning the proper allocation of responsibility between the State and Federal court systems;

(4) promote recognition of the importance of the separation of powers doctrine to an independent judiciary; and

(5) encourage education for judges and support personnel of State court systems through national and State organizations, including universities.

(c) The Institute shall not duplicate functions adequately performed by existing nonprofit organizations and shall promote, on the part of agencies of State judicial administration, responsibility for success and effectiveness of State court improvement programs supported by Federal funding.

(d) The Institute shall maintain its principal offices in the State in which it is incorporated and shall maintain therein a designated agent to accept service of process for the Institute. Notice to or service upon the agent shall be deemed notice to or service upon the Institute.

(e) The Institute, and any program assisted by the Institute, shall be eligible to be treated as an organization described in section 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and as an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 which is exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code. If such treatments are conferred in accordance with the provisions of such Code, the Institute, and programs assisted by the Institute, shall be subject to all provisions of such Code relevant to the conduct of organizations exempt from taxation.

(f) The Institute shall afford notice and reasonable opportunity for comment to interested parties prior to issuing

any rule, regulation, guideline, or instruction under this Act, and it shall publish any such rule, regulation, guideline, or instruction in the Federal Register at least thirty days prior to its effective date.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

SEC. 4. (a)(1) The Institute shall be supervised by a Board of Directors, consisting of eleven voting members to be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Board shall have both judicial and nonjudicial members, and shall, to the extent practicable, have a membership representing a variety of backgrounds and reflecting participation and interest in the administration of justice.

(2) The Board shall consist of—

(A) six judges, to be appointed in the manner provided in paragraph (3);

(B) one State court administrator, to be appointed in the manner provided in paragraph (3); and

(C) four members from the public sector, no more than two of whom shall be of the same political party.

(3) The President shall appoint six judges and one State court administrator from a list of candidates submitted by the Conference of Chief Justices. The Conference of Chief Justices shall submit a list of at least fourteen individuals, including judges and State court administrators, whom the con-

ference considers best qualified to serve on the Board. Prior to consulting with or submitting a list to the President, the Conference of Chief Justices shall obtain and consider the recommendations of all interested organizations and individuals concerned with the administration of justice and the objectives of this Act.

(4) The President shall appoint the members under this subsection within sixty days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) The initial members of the Board of Directors shall be the incorporators of the Institute and shall determine the State in which the Institute is to be incorporated.

(b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), the term of each voting member of the Board shall be three years. Each member of the Board shall continue to serve until the successor to such member has been appointed and qualified.

(2) Five of the members first appointed by the President shall serve for a term of two years. Any member appointed to serve for an unexpired term resulting from the death, disability, retirement, or resignation of a member shall be appointed only for such unexpired term, but shall be eligible for reappointment.

(3) The term of the initial members shall commence from the date of the first meeting of the Board, and the term

of each member other than an initial member shall commence from the date of termination of the preceding term.

(c) No member shall be reappointed to more than two consecutive terms immediately following such member's initial term.

(d) Members of the Board shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their official duties.

(e) The members of the Board shall not, by reason of such membership, be considered officers or employees of the United States.

(f) Each member of the Board shall be entitled to one vote. A simple majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business. The Board shall act upon the concurrence of a simple majority of the membership present and voting.

(g) The Board shall select a chairman from among the voting members of the Board. The first chairman shall serve for a term of three years, and the Board shall thereafter annually elect a chairman from among its voting members.

(h) A member of the Board may be removed by a vote of seven members for malfeasance in office, persistent neglect of or inability to discharge the duties of the office, or for any offense involving moral turpitude, but for no other cause.

(i) Regular meetings of the Board shall be held quarterly. Special meetings shall be held from time to time upon the call of the chairman, acting at his discretion or pursuant to the petition of any seven members.

(j) All meetings of the Board, any executive committee of the Board, and any council established in connection with this Act, shall be open and subject to the requirements and provisions of section 552b of title 5, United States Code, relating to open meetings.

(k) In its direction and supervision of the activities of the Institute, the Board shall—

(1) establish such policies and develop such programs for the Institute as will further the achievement of its purpose and the performance of its functions;

(2) establish policy and funding priorities and issue rules, regulations, guidelines, and instructions pursuant to such priorities;

(3) appoint and fix the duties of the Executive Director of the Institute, who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board and shall be a nonvoting ex officio member of the Board;

(4) present, to government departments, agencies, and instrumentalities whose programs or activities relate to the administration of justice in the State judiciaries of the United States, the recommendations of

the Institute for the improvement of such programs or activities;

(5) consider and recommend to both public and private agencies aspects of the operation of the State courts of the United States considered worthy of special study; and

(6) award grants and enter into cooperative agreements or contracts pursuant to section 6(a) of this Act.

OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES

SEC. 5. (a)(1) The Director, subject to general policies established by the Board, shall supervise the activities of persons employed by the Institute and may appoint and remove such employees as he determines necessary to carry out the purposes of the Institute. The Director shall be responsible for the executive and administrative operations of the Institute, and shall perform such duties as are delegated to such Director by the Board and the Institute.

(2) No political test or political qualification shall be used in selecting, appointing, promoting, or taking any other personnel action with respect to any officer, agent, or employee of the Institute, or in selecting or monitoring any grantee, contractor, person, or entity receiving financial assistance under this Act.

(b) Officers and employees of the Institute shall be compensated at rates determined by the Board, but not in excess

of the rate of level V of the Executive Schedule specified in section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(c)(1) Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act, the Institute shall not be considered a department, agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Government.

(2) This section does not limit the authority of the Office of Management and Budget to review and submit comments upon the Institute's annual budget request at the time it is transmitted to the Congress.

(d)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), officers and employees of the Institute shall not be considered officers or employees of the United States.

(2) Officers and employees of the Institute shall be considered officers and employees of the United States solely for the purposes of the following provisions of title 5, United States Code: subchapter I of chapter 81 (relating to compensation for work injuries); chapter 83 (relating to civil service retirement); chapter 87 (relating to life insurance); and chapter 89 (relating to health insurance). The Institute shall make contributions under the provisions referred to in this subsection at the same rates applicable to agencies of the Federal Government.

(e) The Institute and its officers and employees shall be subject to the provisions of section 552 of title 5, United States Code, relating to freedom of information.

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

SEC. 6. (a) The Institute is authorized to award grants and enter into cooperative agreements or contracts, in a manner consistent with subsection (b), in order to—

(1) conduct research, demonstrations, or special projects pertaining to the purposes described in this Act, and provide technical assistance and training in support of tests, demonstrations, and special projects;

(2) serve as a clearinghouse and information center, where not otherwise adequately provided, for the preparation, publication, and dissemination of information with respect to State judicial systems;

(3) participate in joint projects with government agencies, including the Federal Judicial Center, with respect to the purposes of this Act;

(4) evaluate, when appropriate, the programs and projects carried out under this Act to determine their impact upon the quality of criminal, civil, and juvenile justice and the extent to which they have met or failed to meet the purposes and policies of this Act;

(5) encourage and assist in the furtherance of judicial education;

(6) encourage, assist, and serve in a consulting capacity to State and local justice system agencies in the development, maintenance, and coordination of

criminal, civil, and juvenile justice programs and services; and

(7) be responsible for the certification of national programs that are intended to aid and improve State judicial systems.

(b) The Institute is empowered to award grants and enter into cooperative agreements or contracts as follows:

(1) The Institute shall give priority to grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts with—

(A) State and local courts and their agencies,

(B) national nonprofit organizations controlled by, operating in conjunction with, and serving the judicial branches of State governments; and

(C) national nonprofit organizations for the education and training of judges and support personnel of the judicial branch of State governments.

(2) The Institute may, if the objective can better be served thereby, award grants or enter into cooperative agreements or contracts with—

(A) other nonprofit organizations with expertise in judicial administration;

(B) institutions of higher education;

(C) individuals, partnerships, firms, or corporations; and

(D) private agencies with expertise in judicial administration.

(3) Upon application by an appropriate Federal, State, or local agency or institution and if the arrangements to be made by such agency or institution will provide services which could not be provided adequately through nongovernmental arrangements, the Institute may award a grant or enter into a cooperative agreement or contract with a unit of Federal, State, or local government other than a court.

(4) Each application for funding by a State or local court shall be approved by the State's supreme court, or its designated agency or council, which shall receive, administer, and be accountable for all funds awarded by the Institute to such State or local court.

(c) Funds available pursuant to grants, cooperative agreements, or contracts awarded under this section may be used—

(1) to assist State and local court systems in establishing appropriate procedures for the selection and removal of judges and other court personnel and in determining appropriate levels of compensation;

(2) to support education and training programs for judges and other court personnel, for the performance of their general duties and for specialized functions, and to support national and regional conferences and seminars for the dissemination of information on new developments and innovative techniques;

(3) to conduct research on alternative means for using nonjudicial personnel in court decisionmaking activities, to implement demonstration programs to test innovative approaches, and to conduct evaluations of their effectiveness;

(4) to assist State and local courts in meeting requirements of Federal law applicable to recipients of Federal funds;

(5) to support studies of the appropriateness and efficacy of court organizations and financing structures in particular States, and to enable States to implement plans for improved court organization and finance;

(6) to support State court planning and budgeting staffs and to provide technical assistance in resource allocation and service forecasting techniques;

(7) to support studies of the adequacy of court management systems in State and local courts and to implement and evaluate innovative responses to problems of record management, data processing, court

personnel management, reporting and transcription of court proceedings, and juror utilization and management;

(8) to collect and compile statistical data and other information on the work of the courts and on the work of other agencies which relate to and effect the work of the courts;

(9) to conduct studies of the causes of trial and appellate court delay in resolving cases and to establish and evaluate experimental programs for reducing case processing time;

(10) to develop and test methods for measuring the performance of judges and courts and to conduct experiments in the use of such measures to improve their functioning;

(11) to support studies of court rules and procedures, discovery devices, and evidentiary standards, to identify problems with their operation, to devise alternative approaches to better reconcile the requirements of due process with the needs for swift and certain justice, and to test their utility;

(12) to support studies of the outcomes of cases in selected subject matter areas to identify instances in which the substance of justice meted out by the courts diverges from public expectations of fairness, consisten-

cy, or equity, to propose alternative approaches to the resolving of cases in problem areas, and to test and evaluate those alternatives;

(13) to support programs to increase court responsiveness to the needs of citizens through citizen education, improvement of court treatment of witnesses, victims, and jurors, and development of procedures for obtaining and using measures of public satisfaction with court processes to improve court performance;

(14) to test and evaluate experimental approaches to providing increased citizen access to justice, including processes which reduce the cost of litigating common grievances and alternative techniques and mechanisms for resolving disputes between citizens; and

(15) to carry out such other programs, consistent with the purposes of this Act, as may be considered appropriate by the Institute.

(d) The Institute shall incorporate, in any grant, cooperative agreement, or contract awarded under this section in which a State or local judicial system is the recipient, the requirement that the recipient provide a matching amount, from private or public sources, equal to 25 per centum of the total cost of such grant, cooperative agreement, or contract, except that such requirement may be waived in exceptionally

rare circumstances upon the approval of the chief justice of the highest court of the State and a majority of the Board of Directors.

(e) The Institute shall monitor and evaluate, or provide for independent evaluations of, programs supported in whole or in part under this Act to insure that the provisions of this Act, the bylaws of the Institute, and the applicable rules, regulations, and guidelines promulgated pursuant to this Act, are carried out.

(f) The Institute shall provide for an independent study of the financial and technical assistance programs under this Act.

LIMITATIONS ON GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, AND CONTRACTS

SEC. 7. (a) With respect to grants made and contracts or cooperative agreements entered into under this Act, the Institute shall—

(1) insure that no funds made available by the Institute to a recipient shall be used at any time, directly or indirectly, to influence the issuance, amendment, or revocation of any Executive order or similar promulgation by any Federal, State, or local agency, or to undertake to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by the Congress of the United States, or by any State or local legislative body, or any State proposal

by initiative petition, unless a governmental agency, legislative body, a committee, or a member thereof—

(A) requests personnel of the recipient to testify, draft, or review measures or to make representations to such agency, body, committee, or member; or

(B) is considering a measure directly affecting the activities under this Act of the recipient or the Institute;

(2) insure all personnel engaged in grant, cooperative agreement, or contract assistance activities supported in whole or part by the Institute refrain, while so engaged, from any partisan political activity; and

(3) insure that each recipient that files with the Institute a timely application for refunding is provided interim funding necessary to maintain its current level of activities until—

(A) the application for refunding has been approved and funds pursuant thereto received; or

(B) the application for refunding has been finally denied in accordance with section 9 of this Act.

(b) No funds made available by the Institute under this Act, either by grant, cooperative agreement, or contract, may be used to support or conduct training programs for the

purpose of advocating particular nonjudicial public policies or encouraging nonjudicial political activities.

(c) The authority to enter into cooperative agreements, contracts, or any other obligations under this Act shall be effective only to such extent, and in such amounts, as are provided in advance in appropriation Acts.

(d) To insure that funds made available under this Act are used to supplement and improve the operation of State courts, rather than to support basic court services, funds shall not be used—

(1) to supplant State or local funds currently supporting a program or activity; or

(2) to construct court facilities or structures, except to remodel existing facilities to demonstrate new architectural or technological techniques, or to provide temporary facilities for new personnel or for personnel involved in a demonstration or experimental program.

RESTRICTIONS ON ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE

SEC. 8. (a) The Institute shall not—

(1) participate in litigation unless the Institute or a recipient of the Institute is a party, and shall not participate on behalf of any client other than itself;

(2) interfere with the independent nature of any State judicial system nor allow financial assistance to

be used for the funding of regular judicial and administrative activities of any State judicial system other than pursuant to the terms of any grant, cooperative agreement, or contract with the Institute, consistent with the requirements of this Act; or

(3) undertake to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by the Congress of the United States or by any State or local legislative body, except that personnel of the Institute may testify or make other appropriate communication—

(A) when formally requested to do so by a legislative body, committee, or a member thereof;

(B) in connection with legislation or appropriations directly affecting the activities of the Institute; or

(C) in connection with legislation or appropriations dealing with improvements in the State judiciary, consistent with the provisions of this Act.

(b)(1) The Institute shall have no power to issue any shares of stock, or to declare or pay any dividends.

(2) No part of the income or assets of the Institute shall inure to the benefit of any director, officer, or employee, except as reasonable compensation for services or reimbursement for expenses.

(3) Neither the Institute nor any recipient shall contribute or make available Institute funds or program personnel or equipment to any political party or association, or the campaign of any candidate for public or party office.

(4) The Institute shall not contribute or make available Institute funds or program personnel or equipment for use in advocating or opposing any ballot measure, initiative, or referendum, except those dealing with improvement of the State judiciary, consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(c) Officers and employees of the Institute or of recipients shall not at any time intentionally identify the Institute or the recipient with any partisan or nonpartisan political activity associated with a political party or association, or the campaign of any candidate for public or party office.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES

SEC. 9. The Institute shall prescribe procedures to insure that—

(1) financial assistance under this Act shall not be suspended unless the grantee, contractor, person, or entity receiving such financial assistance has been given reasonable notice and opportunity to show cause why such actions should not be taken; and

(2) financial assistance under this Act shall not be terminated, an application for refunding shall not be denied, and a suspension of financial assistance shall

not be continued for longer than thirty days, unless the grantee, contractor, person, or entity receiving financial assistance has been afforded reasonable notice and opportunity for a timely, full, and fair hearing. When requested, such hearing shall be conducted by an independent hearing examiner appointed by the Institute in accordance with procedures established in regulations promulgated by the Institute.

PRESIDENTIAL COORDINATION

SEC. 10. The President may, to the extent not inconsistent with any other applicable law, direct that appropriate support functions of the Federal Government may be made available to the Institute in carrying out its functions under this Act.

RECORDS AND REPORTS

SEC. 11. (a) The Institute is authorized to require such reports as it considers necessary from any recipient with respect to activities carried out pursuant to this Act.

(b) The Institute is authorized to prescribe the keeping of records with respect to funds provided under any grant, cooperative agreement, or contract under this Act, and shall have access to such records at all reasonable times for the purpose of insuring compliance with such grant, cooperative agreement, or contract or the terms and conditions upon which financial assistance was provided.

(c) Copies of all reports pertinent to the evaluation, inspection, or monitoring of any recipient shall be submitted on a timely basis to such recipient, and shall be maintained in the principal office of the Institute for a period of at least five years after such evaluation, inspection, or monitoring. Such reports shall be available for public inspection during regular business hours, and copies shall be furnished, upon request, to interested parties upon payment of such reasonable fees as the Institute may establish.

(d) Non-Federal funds received by the Institute, and funds received for projects funded in part by the Institute or by any recipient from a source other than the Institute, shall be accounted for and reported as receipts and disbursements separate and distinct from Federal funds.

AUDITS

SEC. 12. (a)(1) The accounts of the Institute shall be audited annually. Such audits shall be conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards by independent certified public accountants who are certified by a regulatory authority of the jurisdiction in which the audit is undertaken.

(2) Any audits under this subsection shall be conducted at the place or places where the accounts of the Institute are normally kept. The person conducting the audit shall have access to all books, accounts, financial records, reports, files,

and other papers or property belonging to or in use by the Institute and necessary to facilitate the audit. The full facilities for verifying transactions with the balances and securities held by depositories, fiscal agents, and custodians shall be afforded to any such person.

(3) The report of the annual audit shall be filed with the General Accounting Office and shall be available for public inspection during business hours at the principal office of the Institute.

(b)(1) In addition to the annual audit, the financial transactions of the Institute for any fiscal year during which Federal funds are available to finance any portion of its operations may be audited by the General Accounting Office in accordance with such rules and regulations as may be prescribed by the Comptroller General of the United States.

(2) Any audit under this subsection shall be conducted at the place or places where accounts of the Institute are normally kept. The representatives of the General Accounting Office shall have access to all books, accounts, financial records, reports, files, and other papers or property belonging to or in use by the Institute and necessary to facilitate the audit. The full facilities for verifying transactions with the balances and securities held by depositories, fiscal agents, and custodians shall be afforded to such representatives. All such books, accounts, financial records, reports, files, and

other papers or property of the Institute shall remain in the possession and custody of the Institute throughout the period beginning on the date such possession or custody commences and ending three years after such date, but the General Accounting Office may require the retention of such books, accounts, financial records, reports, files, and other papers or property for a longer period under section 117(b) of the Accounting and Auditing Act of 1950 (31 U.S.C. 67(b)).

(3) A report of each audit under this subsection shall be made by the Comptroller General to the Congress and to the Attorney General, together with such recommendations with respect thereto as the Comptroller General considers advisable.

(c)(1) The Institute shall conduct, or require each recipient to provide for, an annual fiscal audit. The report of each such audit shall be maintained for a period of at least five years at the principal office of the Institute.

(2) The Institute shall submit to the Comptroller General of the United States copies of audits conducted under this subsection, and the Comptroller General may, in addition, inspect the books, accounts, financial records, files, and other papers or property belonging to or in use by such grantee, contractor, person, or entity, which relate to the disposition or use of funds received from the Institute. Such audit re-

ports shall be available for public inspection during regular business hours, at the principal office of the Institute.

AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

SEC. 13. There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act not to exceed $20,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1982, $30,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1983, and $40,000,000 for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1984.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SEC. 14. The provisions of this Act shall take effect on October 1, 1981.

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