

Chapter Five

Government Operations

Section 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Local Control

As stated in Chapter I, Section 2, General Provisions, local control is the primary policy corner stone of CSAC.

B. County as State Agent vs. County As Local Entity

Those areas where counties act primarily as agents of the state in performing a state service - and do so with substantial state financing - should be distinguished from areas of local interest or state and local interest when determining the basis for applying statewide standards and supervision.

C. Scope of Services

Each county should determine the scope and extent of the governmental services that it will render in response to the needs and desires of the local community. Each county should further examine its ability to support such services, always subject to the requirement to provide mandated services as state agents.

D. Uniformity in Services

In performing mandated duties, the degree of uniformity required should be carefully determined, with emphasis on the purpose of each requirement with the goal of uniformity not for uniformity's sake, but to serve a specific beneficial purpose. Progress can come only from the application of a variety of administrative approaches and methods.

E. Freedom to Devise Program Operating Policies

Counties should be free to devise their own operating policies for all government programs not financed wholly or substantially by federal or state funds.

F. Whole Responsibility with Board of Supervisors

To be directly responsible to the people, general control of county government should be placed wholly with the board of supervisors.

G. Non-Partisan Nature of County Government

The office of county supervisor should continue to be non-partisan, enabling the people to vote on the basis of local issues and to enable supervisors to solve local problems without binding allegiances to political parties.

Section 2: ELECTRONIC DATA PROCESSING (EDP)

A. General Principles

Counties are fully aware of the benefits that automation can provide for the improvement of government function and pledge their cooperation to the state and federal governments in developing the means to fully utilize electronic resources.

B. State and County EDP Policies

Differences in state and local applications of EDP must be fully recognized in order that efforts at excessive standardization will not reduce the effectiveness of the total system.

Section 3: LOCAL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

Emphasis must be given to the different government organizational structures that exist throughout the state and to the principle of "local control." Legal constraints and time-consuming restrictions have severely limited the use of the charter as a method of obtaining local control. The State Constitution and statutes should be revised to provide authorization for counties to independently organize by local control.

The principle of local control also applies to the issue of elected "ministerial" officials. The board of supervisors should have authority to submit proposals for appointment of elected officials to the voters.

Therefore, counties should be allowed maximum flexibility to structure their organization through the process of "local option control."

Also, counties should be allowed to submit to their electorate the questions of whether elected non-legislative officials, except District Attorney, should be appointed by the board of supervisors.

Section 4: LIBRARY SERVICES

A. General Principles

The continued vitality of our free and democratic society and the effective operation of government at all levels is dependent on an informed and knowledgeable citizenry. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all levels of government, including county government, to assure that all people have access to sources of knowledge and information that affect their personal and professional lives and society as a whole.

The public library is a supplement to the formal system of free public education and a source of information and inspiration to persons of all ages, as well as a resource for continuing education. As such, public libraries deserve adequate financial support from all levels of government.

Counties are among the traditional providers of library and information services to the people. Counties form a natural region for the provision of this service. Citizens expect free library services that are responsive to local needs.

B. Intergovernmental Relationships

The state is urged to recognize public libraries as part of the system of public education and should continue providing financial assistance to support their operation.

The state should also continue and strengthen funding for the interjurisdictional library cooperatives established under Education Code Sections 18700 through 18766.

C. Privacy and Censorship

Recognizing the right of an individual to privacy, circulation records and other records identifying the names of library users with specific materials, including Internet usage, are to be confidential in nature.

Section 5: SPECIAL DISTRICTS

See Chapter VII: PLANNING, LAND USE AND HOUSING, Section 5.

Section 6: ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS

A. Reimbursement for Special and Vacancy Election Costs

Counties will support efforts to reinstate language directing the state to provide reimbursement to counties that hold a special election to replace a member of Congress or a member of the state Legislature to fill a vacancy, as well as for the cost of special elections called for other reasons.

B. All Mail Ballot Elections

Given the increasing popularity of voting by mail and the increasing costs of administering elections due to state and federal regulations, and also considering the positive effect it would have on voter participation, counties support proposals that would give Boards of Supervisors the option of holding any election by mail.