



September 28, 2000

The Honorable Chief Justice George, California Supreme Court
Palmer Madden, President of the State Bar of California
Members of the Board of Governors of the State Bar

Re: Senate Bill 1782 / Multijurisdictional Practice Task Force

Dear Chief Justice George, Mr. Madden, and Members of the California Bar Board of Governors:

We are writing on behalf of the American Corporate Counsel Association (ACCA) to urge you to include the perspective of several corporate in-house counsel on the Task Force Chief Justice George is creating to examine the issue of multijurisdictional practice and admission to the California Bar. ACCA would be pleased to assist the Task Force in identifying corporate counsel to help to fulfill its important goals.

Corporate Counsel in California

Corporate counsel are an important and growing segment of the bar. They are not only full-fledged, active practitioners in the state of California, but also the primary purchasers of millions of dollars of corporate legal services provided by California law firms.

Reciprocal admissions is a vital issue to the thousands of California in-house counsel who are members of the bar. It is an even more important issue to the California companies and non-profits which corporate counsel represent. The corporate counsel perspective on this issue is perhaps the least self-interested of those that will be participating in this dialogue: corporate counsel are not worried about licensing issues from the perspective of preventing competition, but rather are focused almost exclusively on how to obtain high quality legal services for their corporate client. Thus, we believe that it is imperative to the credibility of the Task Force's work that the perspective of the in-house community and their corporate clients be represented on any commission studying this issue. This is not an issue that should be the sole province of the outside bar.

About ACCA

ACCA is the only national bar association exclusively serving the professional needs and interests of in-house counsel. We have a current membership of over 12,200. These members work in over 5,000 separate business and not-for-profit organizations across the United States and overseas. The majority of these businesses are located or do business in California. Over 1,500 of the more than 5,000 in-house counsel who actually practice in California (as licensed members of the bar) are ACCA members. ACCA's California members represent a great diversity of businesses -- over 640 separate companies -- including: multi-national corporations with large law departments, non-profit organizations and small start-ups, family-owned and dot-com business with only a single lawyer on staff.

ACCA has four active chapters in California located in the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, Los Angeles and Orange Counties and San Diego. Like the national parent organization, each of these chapters offers its local memberships a full panoply of services, including networking, educational programming, online resources, and a wide variety of initiatives focused on such priorities as pro bono service, diversity in the legal profession and relationships with local law schools and their students.

While ACCA does not lobby or engage in significant efforts to influence governmental decision-making at either the local or national levels, ACCA frequently files its comments and offers its expertise on matters involving in-house counsel and their practice environment. ACCA regularly files amicus briefs with courts across the country, including the Courts of Appeal and Supreme Court of California, and provides testimony before legislatures, professional groups, licensing authorities and courts when these entities are considering issues that would specifically affect in-house legal practice or corporate counsel as a subset of the legal profession.

ACCA stands ready to help the Task Force identify top in-house leaders to serve on this Task Force and ensure that the perspective of the in-house bar is adequately represented in this debate.

ACCA is ready to provide the Task Force with a list of talented and diverse in-house counsel, many of whom have been active in State Bar committees throughout the United States to assist the Task Force in its deliberations. In addition, the national and local branches of ACCA look forward to the opportunity to providing scholarly research, testimony, and practical guidance to you and to the Legislature at the appropriate time to aid in your decision-making process.

The legal admissions standards of the States were adopted and based on legal traditions, jurisdictional standards, highly limited communication and information resources, and the limited mobility which characterized the 18th century, not the 21st. Every other major profession 'including doctors, accountants, architects, engineers, and so on' already have adopted standards of reciprocity which recognize this 21st century reality. We applaud this Task Force for their leadership in examining this important issue and for their desire to propose solutions which will

address the need for an admissions system that will foster the smooth delivery of ethical and sophisticated legal services for California corporations and citizens in the 21st century and beyond.

Please contact John McGuckin at the number listed below, or any of us, if we can be of service to you in your efforts or if you are interested in allowing us to help you identify qualified in-house counsel representatives to join the MJP Task Force.

Sincerely,

John McGuckin, Jr.
ACCA (national) Board of Directors, Chairman ACCA's Advocacy Committee
Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Union Bank of California

Michael Roster
Chair-Elect of the ACCA (national) Board of Directors
Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Golden West Financial Corporation

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Dennis Stryker
Past President, ACCA's San Diego Chapter
General Counsel, Rick Engineering Company

Susan Hackett
Senior Vice President & General Counsel, ACCA (national)
ABA-appointed corporate counsel liaison to the ABA's MJP Commission

Cc: Frederick J. Krebs, President, ACCA
Maud Mater, 2000 Chair, ACCA (national) Board of Directors