

shop: Joseph Ratzinger. He is now Pope Benedict XVI. tell on his sword last weekend. He assumed total responsibility decision to re-admit Hullermann to pastoral care work and Ratzinger had not been informed. Vatican spokesman Federico was just as quick to accuse anyone who might imply personal liability on Ratzinger's part of a media witch hunt against the

ing Gruber is telling the truth, one still wonders if Hullermann e had a chance to abuse children as a priest in 1986 had only done what decency and common sense would have dic- any people in 1980: calling police and removing Hullermann act with children. But in the looking-glass, make-believe world Catholic Church hierarchy, the Church's own policy probably uch a thing. Ironically, this is so according to Ratzinger himself.

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Staff Layoffs: The Wrong Solution

By Lou Shapiro

Calling laying off 320 court employees a solution to the budget-ary deficit is like putting a cast on a patient's healthy foot, when he has an ailing heart.

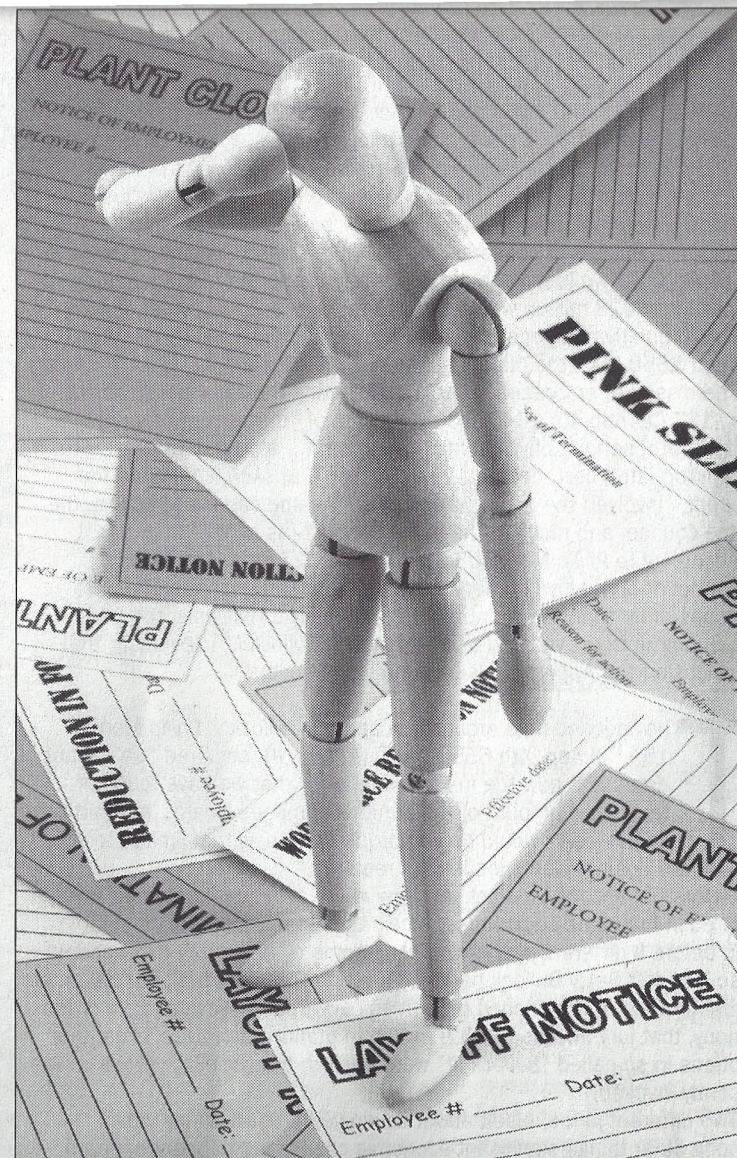
The reason why there is a deficit is not due to an overstaff-dilemma in the court staff arena. It is because inefficiency is being tolerated on a daily basis. I invite the reader to go to their local courthouse, and spend a few minutes in a criminal courtroom to observe the execution of the daily calendar. You will find that many, if not most of the defendants, have either a mental illness, a substance abuse addiction, or both. These defendants are most likely being prosecuted for offenses such as drinking alcohol in public, theft of a candy bar, or sleeping on the sidewalk.

Now, take note of the following resources that are being exhausted to deal with a matter such as sleeping on the sidewalk. Two police have to make an arrest, transport the person to the station, and draft a police report, which will probably take four hours. Then, another police officer has to process the person and book him or her, taking another two hours. This person is then brought to court on a bus, staffed by Los Angeles County Sheriff's deputies. A filing prosecutor spends time reading the report and filing a charge. A public defender then spends at least an hour reviewing the report and advising the person. Then the person is brought to court, where more police are needed to assist.

In addition, the services of a judge, prosecutor, court reporter, and two court clerks are needed to address the matter. The person is then housed in county jail, where funding is used to provide for food, living and other associated expenses. I'm sure I am neglecting to mention other people who are involved in this process behind the scenes.

The problem is the failure to implement publicly funded residential rehabilitate services for such people, not under-used court staff. Rather than the court system wasting time and money on prosecuting the mentally-ill and addicts, it can spend a fraction of the price and build support systems for them to heal and get back on their feet. This would avoid having to punish the innocent, hard working court staff, who are every bit as vital to the system as the very laws perpetuated by the system.

To summarize the current cure to the deficit: Well-trained and able working people are losing their jobs and health care benefits so that the schizophrenic veteran, who risked his life for our country, can continue to be prosecuted for trespassing on the beach after-hours. The real crisis is the lack of support to the homeless and underprivileged, which



has the effect of jamming and swamping the court system. I cry out to the smart and influential people in Sacramento to stop putting casts on healthy bones, and rather, treat the ailing hearts.

Apparently, publicly funded rehabilitative institutions and services existed until the era of President/Governor Ronald Reagan. But they were cut because of a deficit. As the old saying goes: "You can pay now, or you pay later." Right now, we are paying dearly.

LOU SHAPIRO is a deputy public defender for the county of Los Angeles. He is currently assigned to the Criminal Courts Building in downtown Los Angeles, where he defends clients accused of committing misdemeanors and felonies.