Section 25
Counties and Cities Questioning, Challenging, and Rejecting Regional Governance

10/22/1974

Board of Supervisors, Kern County, California
Resolution 74-576:

Expression of Opposition to Erosion of Local Representative Government by Unwanted State and Federal Imposition of Regional Non-Elected Authorities

Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Kern, State of California

22-3

In the matter of:
EXPRESSION OF OPPOSITION TO EROSION OF LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT BY UNWANTED STATE AND FEDERAL IMPOSITION OF REGIONAL NON-ELECTED AUTHORITIES

Resolution No. 74-576
Minute Book 285 Page -
Resolution Book 60 Page -

I, VERA K. GIBSON, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Kern, State of California, do hereby certify that the following resolution, proposed by Supervisor Jackson, seconded by Supervisor Mitchell, was duly passed and adopted by said Board of Supervisors at an official meeting hereof this 22nd day of October, 19 74, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Jackson, Head, Young, Webb, Mitchell
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, County of Kern, State of California

RESOLUTION

Section 1. WHEREAS:

(a) The inception of California counties in 1850 was in recognition of the need for divisions of government functioning at the level of the citizens served with policy-making officials selected by their fellow-citizens at the ballot-box and ready accessibility of government operations to the people; and

(b) In the first fifty years of California Statehood the state law gave to the counties practically all the functions of government that directly concerned the citizens and the local government system worked effectively to meet the needs of the people of this great State during the early years of its formative growth and on into the modern era with the flexibility to meet the changing needs of our citizens and the challenges of these times except as limited and eroded by State and Federal intrusions into responsibilities historically exercised by the division of local government closest to the people; and

(c) Despite the outstanding performance of county government over the years the myth has been circulated that government is best administered when it is farther removed from the citizens it serves and that policy-making

government administrators should be selected for the people rather than by the people and that they should administer governmental functions practically immune from effective accountability to the people; and

(d) These myths have been without support in fact but have permeated the thinking of those seeking greater centralizations of government power at eschelons so far removed from the people served as to be practically inaccessible and unresponsive to the local citizens, the latest manifestation of such unwanted government restructuring being the State and Federal imposition of more government by more remote boards, committees and commissions composed of more non-elected policy-making administrators armed with veto power over decisions made by locally-elected representatives of the people; and

(e) Not only is "regional government" inherently destructive to the effective functioning of the historic American system of representative government but it is without legal basis in our Federal and State Constitutions and conflicts with our traditional concepts of local control and accountability of our public servants; and

(f) The trend to "regionalism" in American government is stifling our citizens' traditional right and opportunity to directly participate in decision-making at the local level, is thwarting the citizens' right to know what government is deciding for him, is casting on our citizens burdens of financing services over which his elected representatives have no control, and is subverting the traditional American system of constitutional government by elected representation; and

(g) There can be no justification for such damage to our system in light of the recently published "Report of the (Governor's) Task Force on Local Government Reform" which examined the myths which have been advanced to justify the erosion of local government and said Task Force found in truth and fact that the myths are false and that instead of fomenting the dissipation of local control we should take action to preserve its concept and strengthen its authority and ability to fulfill its historic role as the level of government closest to our people and best able to respond to their need for those governmental services which can be provided with a minimum of interference in the lives and freedom of the people we serve; and

(h) The Governor's Task Force lays to rest the usual excuse advanced to justify regionalism by noting in its Report as follows:

> "The proliferation of regional units (especially by the state and federal governments) prompted the Task Force to examine the citizens' need for regional decision-making systems...There is no evidence to support the contention that regional organizations would be more efficient or effective than existing local governments acting cooperatively...It is highly likely that...regional governments will be less responsive than present local governments."
>
> "These findings lead us to conclude that:
> a. There will be a loss of local authority and responsibility, decreasing the viability of existing local governments, if regional organizations are established,
> b. There will also be a loss of citizen control over policies, plans and programs.
> c. Any regional organization will ultimately become another layer of government."
>
> "Therefore, we do not believe that there is a need for regional governments or that there must be an integrated plan for an entire region. Instead, we find a need for more effective areawide decision-making mechanisms...(and) that such mechanisms must be tied to the principles of citizen control and local home rule."; and

(i) The Task Force concluded that local representative government is the best system to meet the challenges of our times and a restructuring of local government through imposition of "regional government" would be based on false assumptions and, while a continuing effort must always be made to improve efficiency and economy in our government, the traditional American system can best be preserved by solving multi-county problems through voluntary mutual action by the elected representatives of our units of government and thus avoid the irreparable damage to our freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution which will result from any further involuntary imposition of non-elected regional authorities into our system;

Section 2. NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Supervisors of the County of Kern, State of California, as follows:

1. This Board hereby expresses its absolute opposition to the erosion of local representative government by unwanted State and Federal imposition of regional non-elected boards, commissions and committees.

2. The clarion call of El Dorado County in 1973 for counties in California to join together in investigating means of effective action to stop the inroads of "regionalism" should forthwith be implemented by counties

meeting together through their elected representatives, the Members of the respective Board of Supervisors, to lay down a united program for effective resistance to the inroads of "regional government" and to strengthen local government's ability to handle multi-county problems through voluntary mutual approaches.

3. For the purpose hereinabove stated, this Board urges that representatives of the elected governing boards of each and all of the counties of California assemble together in the County of El Dorado or the County of Kern before the end of this year and we do herewith invite early acknowledgment from each Board of interest in so meeting.

4. The Clerk of this Board is directed to forward copies of this Resolution to the following:

a) The Hon. Gerald Ford, President of the United States of America
b) The Hon. Ronald Reagan, Governor of California
c) Members of the California Legislature representing Kern County
d) The Board of Supervisors of all California counties
e) The County Supervisors Association of California