

RESOLUTION NO. 2104

A RESOLUTION URGING A SUMMONS TO ACTION
FOR REFORM OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles, along with the citizens of our small City, are frustrated with and resentful of the growing failure of our criminal justice system to deter crime and punish criminals. We believe that this failure, particularly in the area of juvenile crime, has resulted in a serious loss of faith in the ability of our institutions to insure the simple order that is a necessary prerequisite to the preservation of individual rights and freedoms. We fear that many of our people will abandon their traditional reliance on the rule of law and either retreat behind bars and personal weapons or resort to vigilante solutions to neighborhood crime; and

WHEREAS, we assert that nothing less than fundamental reform of the California criminal justice system will restore the people's confidence in the rule of law and the ability of our traditional forms of government to provide security for the law-abiding citizen; and

WHEREAS, we urgently solicit the attention of those with power to effect change. While we are not lawyers, criminologists, sociologists or otherwise expert in crime and punishment, we as elected local government officials are closer to the people and feel that we hear their message sooner and clearer. This is what we hear:

Dissatisfaction with the status quo is so
advanced that changes should be attempted even if

proposed solutions or new ideas are not perfectly conceived and certain of success. In other words -- DO SOMETHING.

People will support the tax effort necessary to fund true reform of the system but deeply resent the continued tax support of a system that just isn't working. Specifically more emphasis should be placed on detention and restitution and less on rehabilitation and probation.

Reform should emphasize the positive power of work as a partial solution to the related problems of idleness and crime. There is nothing cruel and unusual in good hard work.

People want support for the victims of crime and also for witnesses, jurists and other citizens who bolster the efforts to control crime without the compensation received by the professionals.

The administration of justice should be flexible and responsive to proper local concerns. Local crimes should be locally adjudicated. Minor infractions and juvenile crimes particularly need the attention of jurists responsive to the needs of their communities. Simpler, swifter procedures commensurate with the seriousness of the violation are badly needed.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we conclude with an optimistic belief that we have in our midst the talented, creative individuals capable of devising a system that works.

Energies should be directed to that task rather than on attempting to place blame for the current shortcomings. By and large, the incumbents of the current system, judges, prosecutors, prison officials and probation officers endeavor to do difficult work with dedication and integrity. Public anger should only be directed at those who resist necessary change out of habit or special interest.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we pledge our efforts in support of reform. We urgently solicit the aid of our fellow cities, our legislators and all others with the power to make a difference in this effort to restore a sense of safety and security to our communities.

The City Clerk is hereby directed to send copies of this document to the League of Cities, our Federal and State Legislators, and all other individuals and organizations able to assist in this effort.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 20th day of December, 1976.


MAYOR

ATTEST:


CITY CLERK