

Robert A. Houtman
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April 3, 2001

Dr. Alan Kalmanoff
Executive Director
Institute for Law and Policy Planning
2613 Hillegass Avenue
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SUBJ: Letter of reference/recommendation

It is my pleasure to provide this letter regarding The Institute for Law and Policy Planning (ILPP). As former Chairman of the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners and former Circuit Court Administrator for the Ninth Circuit Court in Kalamazoo County, Michigan I have standing to evaluate the performance of ILPP.

The Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners chose to conduct a broad based evaluation and study of the entire law enforcement system in Kalamazoo County to determine where efficiencies could be gained, where consolidations could be made, how jail overcrowding could be abated and, ultimately, if and when a new consolidated law enforcement facility should be requested from the voters. I was appointed to the selection committee that had the task of selecting a consulting group for this evaluation.

ILPP was successful in being awarded the contract for the comprehensive study because the committee determined they would bring a) a broad spectrum of national experts in law enforcement to directly evaluate all sectors of the county's law enforcement system b) no preconceived ideas that a new facility (bricks and mortar) was necessary c) timely, honest and blunt recommendations for improving the system d) a recognition that they would work for the Board of Commissioners and the tax paying public, not the institutional bureaucrats and e) fearless reporting of recommended changes irrespective of political pressures. The support for their selection from the committee (which was broad based with more than county officials involved) was nearly unanimous.

ILPP lived up to our expectations and delivered a timely and detailed report which "pulled no punches". Following receipt of the report with a 9-0 vote of the Board of Commissioners, the local Prosecuting Attorney who is head of the Kalamazoo Criminal Justice Commission, requested that the Board of Commissioners retain Dr. Kalmanoff to help monitor implementation and "push" local leaders to accomplish the goals and changes recommended in the report and that were adopted by the Criminal Justice Commission as their own. The Board agreed to this further involvement of the ILPP and

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Dr. Kalmanoff with another 9-0 vote that further demonstrates their satisfaction with the initial report. The Board has since reconfirmed this support for Dr. Kalmanoff's continued monitoring with a third 9-0 vote.

Based on my active involvement and long history in elected office and administration with Kalamazoo County, I am very satisfied with the quality, quantity, candidness and implementation of ILPP's report as well as Dr. Kalmanoff's continued involvement. While this county is not unique in it's myopic view of the efficacy of it's existing systems, it certainly is a prime example of a county and a law enforcement system which are capable (with effective leadership and implementation of the report's recommendations) of becoming more efficient and effective for the customers of the law enforcement system and the taxpayers of Kalamazoo County. Of particular note is the emphasis of ILPP's report on facility planning and the national experts that they brought to bear on this topic. As stated earlier, no preconceived ideas were brought by ILPP regarding the need for a consolidated facility. However, they did make specific recommendations for restructuring, streamlining and expediting processes in the law enforcement system plus reducing jail population, all as required precursors to any request for a new facility. In essence, if these recommendations are implemented, the Criminal Justice Commission will have "legitimacy" to ask the Board of Commissioners and ultimately through them, the voters, to fund such a facility.

I highly recommend other municipalities and organizations consider ILPP as "among the best" of consulting groups in the area of law enforcement and public policy generation. I would be happy to discuss my feelings with entities contemplating contracting with ILPP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Houtman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert A. Houtman