Gauteng workshops on legislative drafting

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Dear Dean Skeen,

I write to support your efforts to institute at Wits a programme in legislative drafting for democratic social change. As you know, six of our officials attended the course conducted this past term by Professor Ann Seidman and Robert B. Seidman, who I understand will be involved in the new programme. We have been very satisfied with the training that our officials received in that course, and the bills and research reports that they produced.

For some time, it has been apparent that in Gauteng Province and the nation as a whole, and certainly in my Department, legislative drafting constitutes a significant choke-point in the transformational process. For example, in Gauteng our Welfare system still has basically the same institutional structures that it had in the waning apartheid years. At its core, it functions in terms of handouts to the poor and weak, leaving intact the social and economic structures that reproduce poverty. Transformation requires that we transform our own department, and seek to induce change in the processes and structures of the NGOs through whom we deliver our welfare services. Within the present framework of welfare legislation, we cannot achieve these urgent transformations.

This semester six of our officials have attended a course at Wits in legislative for social change, which we understand serves as the pattern for the proposed new instructional programme. There they not only began to learn the techniques of drafting, but, probably more importantly, learned a theory and methodology for transforming policy into implementable law. That they have learned well; and in the learning, they produced six welfare bills (on Provincial and Local government relationships and delegation of functions; on the creation of new Regional Social Welfare Institutes;
on the erection and control of shelters for Street Children; on the
prevention of abuse of the elderly; on the promotion of a Barrier free
environment for people with disabilities on the creation of a social
development fund) all of which tend to transform the existing welfare
structures in the direction of our new, developmental paradigm. Those
bills we have just tabled in the legislature, thus starting the processes of
consultation and discourse that, we hope, will lead to their enactment.

Gauteng, South Africa as a whole, and, I believe, all the Third World
needs a legislative drafting programme such as you propose. I strongly
support your efforts, and wish you well in the funding efforts required
for it.

Very truly yours,

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