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Our opinions

Lawmakers put on notice

The Michigan Court of Appeals just issued a warning to state lawmakers about their responsibility for advancing justice.

An appellate panel rejected claims by the state that it could not be sued over its system of county-based funding for indigent defendants. The court panel also made it clear it thought those challenging the systems run in Berrien, Genesee and Muskegon counties had a good case.

Michigan's court system is a creation of the state, yet, for budgetary convenience, lawmakers have left it to counties to provide lawyers for poor defendants. A national analysis recently found Michigan in the bottom 10 of states for such spending.

It would be better if lawmakers would take reform on of their own accord, rather than being forced to do what's right under an eventual court order.

<http://www.lansingstatejournal.com/article/20090613/OPINION01/906130310/1086>