

JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES AND CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 12

In Support of State Courts' Responsibility to Promote Bias-Free Behavior

WHEREAS, significant progress has been made in combating racial and ethnic prejudice in the United States; and

WHEREAS, bias and prejudice have no place in the courts; and

WHEREAS, the courts have the special role as impartial arbiters of disputes; and

WHEREAS, many states have undertaken a variety of effective strategies to prevent bias in the justice system such as:

- establishing and enforcing court policy and procedures for reporting and handling allegations of bias;
- appointing task forces to promote racial and ethnic fairness;
- promoting a representative workforce;
- conducting educational awareness programs for court personnel;
- providing adequate interpreter services and multilingual court forms; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts has published a useful guide entitled “Achieving Fairness Through Bias-Free Behavior: A Pocket Guide for the Courts” that addresses these strategies and gives recommendations for dealing with bias; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts has provided technical assistance and consultation to state court systems on inquiries regarding racial and ethnic bias in the courts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators:

1. Endorse the recommendations and strategies set forth in the NCSC's "Achieving Fairness Through Bias-Free Behavior: A Pocket Guide for the Courts"; and
2. Encourage each Chief Justice and State Court Administrator to take a leadership role in eliminating bias in the nation's state courts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences urge judges and court administrators:

3. To be vigilant of the various ways in which bias can manifest itself in the justice system; and
4. To take active steps to eliminate bias in the justice system as outlined in the "Achieving Fairness Through Bias-Free Behavior: A Pocket Guide for the Courts"; and
5. To be familiar with exemplary Codes of Conduct relating to bias in state court systems as highlighted in "Achieving Fairness Through Bias-Free Behavior: A Pocket Guide for the Courts"

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Access to and Fairness in the Courts Committee at the 57th Annual Meeting on August 3, 2005.