

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 3

In Support of a National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) have long been committed to fairness and access to justice for all through improvements in all aspects of the administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, CCJ and COSCA's Access to and Fairness in the Courts Committee encourages state courts to engage in outreach to increase fairness and access to justice and share successful strategies and useful information among jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) is initiating a four-phase campaign to mobilize the expertise, experience and commitment of judges and court officers to improve the state of racial and ethnic fairness in the nation's state courts; and

WHEREAS, this project will produce a national compilation of promising practices to achieve racial and ethnic fairness in four key areas:

- Diverse and representative state judicial workforces and juries
- Fair and unbiased behaviors on the part of judges, court staff, and others in court interactions
- Comprehensive, system-wide improvements in racial and ethnic fairness through inter-branch and inter-agency dialogue and action, including elimination of inappropriate racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal and juvenile justice systems
- The availability of timely and high-quality court interpretation services to non-English speaking persons, and of legal services, especially to recent immigrants; and

WHEREAS, CCJ and COSCA have designated three representatives to serve on the Steering Committee guiding this project; and

WHEREAS, the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, the National Association for Court Management, the National Association of Women Judges, and the National Association for State Judicial Educators have appointed delegates to serve on this important Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, Phase I of this project has received funding from the Open Society Institute, the State Justice Institute, and the NCSC; and

WHEREAS, Phase I requires the appointment in each state of a liaison to the project responsible for responding to information/data requests from the Steering Committee and project staff in a prompt and timely manner;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CCJ and COSCA endorse the National Campaign to Ensure the Racial and Ethnic Fairness of America's State Courts and urge each chief justice and state court administrator to support actively the work of this National Campaign by:

- Publicizing the work of this project to judges and court staff within the court system; and
- Appointing a primary contact to serve as liaison from the state judicial branch to the project.

Adopted at the COSCA 2006 Annual Meeting on August 2, 2006.