

Resolution 18

Affirming the Support of the National Consortium of Task Forces and Commissions on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ), along with the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA), has established a Committee on Access to and Fairness in the Courts, because the principle of equal treatment of all persons before the law is essential to the very concept of justice; and

WHEREAS, the National Consortium of Task Forces and Commissions on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts (National Consortium) was established in 1988 and its primary purpose is to provide participating groups and individuals an opportunity to discuss and share research and program activities relating to their common mandate to determine the existence of bias in the courts and to recommend and implement action to overcome it; and

WHEREAS, membership in the National Consortium is open to representatives from states that have established racial and ethnic bias task forces or commissions, bar organizations, local state court organizations with racial/ethnic bias components, and individual members; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts has served as the National Consortium's secretariat and provided direct and in-kind support to this organization since its inception; and

WHEREAS, the National Consortium, through 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; and

WHEREAS, on August 1, 2002, at its Annual Meeting, CCJ adopted a resolution, 'In Support of State Courts' Responsibility to Address Issues of Racial and Ethnic Fairness,' that recommended strategies, and urged CCJ/COSCA to take a leadership role and maintain visibility on this important issue;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices reaffirms the principles embodied in COSCA's 2001 Racial and Ethnic Fairness White Paper, and its own August 1, 2002 resolution, and supports the National Consortium's activities and its efforts to promote these principles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference urges those states that have not already done so to establish task forces or commissions on racial and ethnic bias.

Adopted as proposed by the Access to and Fairness in the Courts Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices at the 27th Midyear Meeting on January 21, 2004.