

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

Resolution 1

In Support of Encouraging Pro Bono Service in Law Schools

WHEREAS, it is vital to the state courts that lawyers commencing their legal careers be qualified to engage in the practice of law; and

WHEREAS, pro bono services performed by law students during law school are a form of essential training which provide students with a real opportunity to learn about the law, the courts, and the students' own professional responsibility for helping to assure access to justice; and

WHEREAS, it is a matter of concern that not all law schools currently assure that all students participate in experiential learning opportunities that would enhance their education in the skills necessary to practice law; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association Standards for Legal Education presently only state that law schools shall provide a substantial opportunity to students for experiential learning; and

WHEREAS, in order to assure that new lawyers will emerge from law school with a real world understanding of litigants and courts, the New York Unified Court System has adopted a new fifty-hour pro bono service requirement for applicants seeking admission to the New York bar; and

WHEREAS, courts and legislatures across the country will likely give serious consideration to the adoption of statewide experiential learning requirements, the modification of the ABA Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar Standards for Legal Education offers an especially effective manner to achieve the goal of more capable practitioners while also providing enormous value to the individuals in our justice system who will be the direct beneficiaries of these services;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices encourages the Chief Justice of each state to discuss with the Deans of their law schools a proposal that students perform pro bono service prior to law school graduation as a condition of admittance to the State bar.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ Professionalism and Competence of the Bar Committee at the 2013 Annual Meeting on July 31, 2013.