

**CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES
CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS**

Resolution 5

In Support of Increased Funding for Court Improvement Programs

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators (Conferences) recognize the importance of keeping families together safely whenever possible and the importance of the efficient and effective handling of child abuse and neglect cases for children in state custody so they achieve reunification or other permanent and safe homes as quickly as possible; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences have made child welfare system reform a priority and have undertaken initiatives to strengthen court oversight of child welfare cases to ensure their prompt and effective disposition; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, Congress created the Court Improvement Program (CIP) to assist state courts in improving their handling of child abuse and neglect cases and to recognize the fiscal impact of federal mandates on the state courts; and

WHEREAS, Congress requires each state to use CIP funds to implement and evaluate system improvements, provide training to judges and attorneys in child welfare cases, and improve data systems to ensure compliance with Congressional timeliness mandates; and

WHEREAS, the CIP funds have been essential to enabling courts to implement federal legislation and policy, including new responsibilities placed on state courts under the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges to state courts' ability to meet both federal mandates and the needs of children and families; and

WHEREAS, proposed legislation under consideration by Congress would provide emergency funding to mitigate the impact of the COVID pandemic on state courts and enable them to meet the challenges caused by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, proposed legislation under consideration by Congress and the FY 2021 budget proposal would increase the authorized budget appropriation for CIP; and

WHEREAS, these bills and the proposed FY2021 budget recognize the pressing need to increase funding to CIP in order to assist state courts in meeting their obligations to our nation's children and families;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators strongly urge Congress to provide additional funding to the Court Improvement Program (CIP) to mitigate the detrimental impact of the pandemic on state courts' handling of child abuse and neglect cases and further to permanently increase funding to the three CIP grant programs so that state courts are able to sustain, enhance, and expand child welfare reforms and effectively implement the provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act.

Adopted by the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Courts, Children, and Families Committee on September 24, 2020.