

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 2-2025

In Support of Establishing a Standing Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform

WHEREAS, state courts handle the vast majority of cases in the United States, with approximately 98 percent of all court cases filed and heard at the state level; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of state supreme courts to regulate the admission and practice of law in the states to ensure a competent legal profession and the protection of the public; and

WHEREAS, people across the country face difficulties in finding the legal help they need because of the shortage of attorneys who serve low-income people, rural communities, and middle-income people who require more affordable legal services; and

WHEREAS, the practice of law is changing through shifting economic realities of legal employers and governments that reduce the ability to mentor and train new lawyers, increased debt burdens on law graduates, generational shifts across the profession, and advances in technology; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (CLEAR) undertook an 18-month examination of how legal education and bar admissions can promote attorney readiness and the ability to serve the public; and

WHEREAS, CLEAR engaged in extensive fact finding to gather perspectives from across the legal profession by convening 12 regional listening conferences across the country, conducting over 85 interviews and focus groups of a wide range of stakeholders, and surveys of over 4,000 judges, 4,400 practicing attorneys, and 600 law students; and

WHEREAS, CLEAR formed three working groups, comprising subject matter experts and critical stakeholders, on practice readiness, bar admissions, and public service. The working groups were tasked with studying the issues of CLEAR and producing reports and recommendations for CLEAR's consideration; and

WHEREAS, the CLEAR report recommends immediate steps to be taken by state supreme courts; and

WHEREAS, long-term collaboration among critical stakeholders across the legal profession is required to address structural impediments to promoting cost-effective innovation and experimentation in legal education geared towards lawyers meeting the legal needs of the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators accept the CLEAR report;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators establish a standing Committee on Legal Education and Admissions Reform (“Committee”) to facilitate implementation of the recommendations in the CLEAR report and investigate and make recommendations to the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators about additional reforms;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Committee should facilitate convenings on a national, regional and jurisdiction-specific basis, bringing together state supreme courts, bar examiners, bar leaders, legal educators and other stakeholders in the legal profession to foster innovation and reform consistent with the CLEAR report; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators request the National Center for State Courts to devote adequate staff and other financial resources to support the work of the Committee.

Proposed by the Boards of Directors of the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators at the CCJ/COSCA 2025 Annual Meeting on July 30, 2025.