

Resolution 11
In Support of National Court Interpreter Legislation

WHEREAS, the growing diversity of the United States' population is reflected in the changing needs of people appearing in the state courts, which are responsible for more than 95 percent of this nation's litigation; and

WHEREAS, courts increasingly serve people who lack fluency in the English language; and

WHEREAS, justice for such persons requires the availability of interpreter services that will allow them to understand and participate in the court process; and

WHEREAS, interpreters must have specialized knowledge of the legal language and process as well as general language skills; and

WHEREAS, state courts have taken an active role in developing the instruments needed to train court interpreters; and

WHEREAS, the cost of developing a pool of interpreters is growing as the number of languages and the population requiring this assistance increases; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has a responsibility to assist state courts to provide this critical component of their adjudicatory process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators urge Congress to establish a national program that will assist state courts in providing court interpreter services, and that the program emulate the very successful model provided by the Court Improvement Program for abuse and neglect cases.

Adopted as proposed by the Joint CCJ/COSCA Access to and Fairness in the Courts Committee at the Annual Meeting on July 31, 2003.