

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

**Resolution 17
In Support of the Importance of Court Security**

WHEREAS, open access to secure, safe courts promotes a sense of confidence in the stability of civil government; and

WHEREAS, recent incidents of violence in Federal and State courts have highlighted the need for improved security for court facilities; and

WHEREAS, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Building, and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks introduced another aspect to protecting our courts: the threat of national and international terrorism; and

WHEREAS, natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, fire, and earthquakes also threaten the ability of courts to remain open; and

WHEREAS, breaches of court security and violence towards judges, their families, court personnel and participants in the judicial process have resulted in serious injuries or death; and

WHEREAS, under Standard 1.2 ('Access to Justice') of the Court Performance Standards a court is required to make its facilities safe, accessible and convenient; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that citizens feel confident and safe in seeking access to their courts and that court personnel feel safe in the performance of their duties; and

WHEREAS, the additional federal and state resources deployed after September 11 have largely bypassed the state courts; and

WHEREAS, state courts have been upgrading their security policies, procedures, and equipment to respond to the new realities primarily at their own expense and are unable to bear the increasing cost of providing adequate security for court facilities; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators have established a Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee whose accomplishments include the development of the Ten Essential Elements for Court Security and Safety Planning, a monograph of court security information and a compilation of best practices for use by state courts; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts, with funding from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance, hosted a 'National Summit on Court Safety and Security' on April 12, 2005 that brought together more than 100 leaders from all segments of the justice system, including over 20 judges to discuss a myriad of security issues and develop a list of recommendations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conference of Chief Justices and Conference of State Court Administrators:

- Agree to take those actions necessary to raise the visibility of the vital importance of court security needs with the public, the court community and our intergovernmental partners; and
- Shall perform the necessary actions to disseminate information and promote the adoption of best practices in court security among the state court systems; and
- Encourage each chief justice and state court administrator to conduct assessments of their courts to determine their vulnerability to natural or man-made disasters; and
- Provide the National Center for State Courts with comprehensive, systematic data on security incidents and natural or man-made disasters so that analysis of such data can be disseminated to aid future preparedness efforts; and
- Urge the federal government to provide funding directly to state courts for security preparedness and response.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Security and Emergency Preparedness Committee at the 57th Annual Meeting on August 3, 2005.