

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

RESOLUTION 1

Commending to the Conference of Chief Justices the American Civil Trial Bar Roundtable Policy Paper on Increasing the Professionalism of American Lawyers

WHEREAS, in 1999 the Conference of Chief Justices adopted a National Action Plan on Lawyer Conduct and Professionalism which set forth the premise that professionalism is aspirational and encompasses broader standards than compliance with ethical rules, observing that ethics are what a lawyer must obey, while principles of professionalism are what a lawyer should live by in conducting his or her affairs; and

WHEREAS, while there is no agreed-upon definition of professionalism, a broad consensus exists as to its major elements, which include respect for the rule of law, integrity and trustworthiness, competency and ethical conduct, participation in pro bono and access to justice initiatives, community service and leadership, civility, and the appropriate exercise of independent judgment; and

WHEREAS, the American Civil Trial Bar Roundtable has developed a Policy Paper to assess current efforts to strengthen the professionalism of lawyers and to make recommendations directed at enhancing professionalism; and

WHEREAS, this Policy Paper sets forth that State Supreme Court Commissions on Professionalism are the most effective organizations for bringing the profession together to implement focused professionalism initiatives, and recommends the creation of such commissions in states without them; and

WHEREAS, the Policy Paper encourages collection of more data on the frequency of unprofessional conduct and the effectiveness of professionalism initiatives; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association adopted Resolution 105B at its 2014 Annual Meeting commending the American Civil Trial Bar Roundtable Policy Paper and recommending that bar organizations study the efforts described in the paper to enhance efforts to improve professionalism;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices commends to its members the American Civil Trial Bar Roundtable Policy Paper on Increasing the Professionalism of American Lawyers and encourages them to review the findings and recommendations when considering ways to improve the professionalism of the bar.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ Professionalism and Competence of the Bar Committee at the 2015 Midyear meeting on January 28, 2015