

**CCJ Resolution 12  
COSCA Resolution 4  
In Support of the State Justice Institute**

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) consist of the chief justices and chief court administrators of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealths and American territories; and

WHEREAS, the State Justice Institute (SJI) was created by Congress in 1986 at the urging of CCJ and COSCA with an authorized funding level of \$25 million annually, to ensure federal support and assistance for state court initiatives that promote national policies and interests in improving the fair and effective administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, strong, effective state judicial systems are the backbone of the American system of justice, resolving over 95% of all litigation in this country; and

WHEREAS, although primary responsibility for improvement of state and local courts rests with state and local governments, there is a significant federal interest in assuring consistency, information-sharing and cooperation among state judiciaries; and

WHEREAS, while the federal government has provided substantial financial assistance to state and local law enforcement, corrections and social services agencies, and civil legal services providers, SJI has fulfilled a unique role in providing assistance for overall improvement of judicial systems which are essential to the achievement of national public safety, child welfare and civil justice objectives; and

WHEREAS, SJI has assisted state courts in implementing national policies on a host of issues including violence against women, child support enforcement, child welfare, full faith and credit enforcement of protection orders of other states, habeas corpus reform, national security, drug enforcement, criminal justice, immigration and welfare reform; and

WHEREAS, SJI has proved remarkably effective during the past sixteen years in carrying out Congress' vision by strengthening state courts and state-federal partnerships in at least the following ways:

- facilitating coordination among the 16,000 state and local courts, particularly with respect to issues having multi-state and national implications, through informational databases, clearinghouses, national and regional training programs, conferences and the like,
- promoting sound state court innovation, through demonstration and pilot projects that can be replicated in other courts, and
- offering technical assistance and training to deal with court operational problems; and

WHEREAS, SJI funding is typically matched by the expenditure of significantly larger sums by state, local and private sources; and

WHEREAS, now more than ever, the unique assistance of SJI is critical as state courts confront such national issues as mass tort litigation, mental health, unrepresented litigants, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, family dysfunction, court security and disaster response; and

WHEREAS, in the report on PL 107-77 Congress has stated its intention to terminate federal

funding of SJI at the conclusion of Fiscal Year 2002; and

WHEREAS, CCJ and COSCA believe that funding at the \$25 million annual level originally authorized by Congress is necessary to fully promote the federal interest in improving the fair and effective administration of justice in the state courts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CCJ and COSCA urge Congress in the strongest possible terms to fund SJI's \$13.5 million budget request as a critical first step to ensuring adequate federal support of state court initiatives to improve the fair and effective administration of justice throughout the nation.

*Adopted as proposed by the Past Presidents Committee of the Conference of Chief Justices at the 25th Midyear Meeting in Tucson, Arizona on January 24, 2002.*

*Adopted in concept by the Conference of State Court Administrators at the 2001 Midyear Meeting in St. Simons Island, Georgia, on November 29, 2001. Final version approved by the COSCA Board of Directors on January 31, 2002.*

COSCA Adoption Date: November 29, 2001

COSCA Expiration Date: December 31, 2002