

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES

Resolution IX

In Support of the National Conference on Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System

WHEREAS, public trust and confidence in the integrity and responsiveness of the court system is essential to fulfillment of the mission of the judiciary; and

WHEREAS, lack of confidence in the courts is sometimes based on misperceptions of the judicial process and failure adequately to communicate the fundamental importance of the judiciary in a system based on the Rule of Law; and

WHEREAS, the public is sometimes offended by perceived lack of equality before the law, inefficiency in court operations, and lack of consideration for persons going through the difficulties of a court process; and

WHEREAS, the judiciary should listen to, and solicit input from, the public as to the adequacy of the justice system; and

WHEREAS, the judiciary should engage in efforts to improve the justice system; and

WHEREAS, negative public attitudes toward the legal profession adversely affect attitudes toward the judiciary and the way it deals with lawyers; and

WHEREAS, the American Bar Association has joined with the Conference of Chief Justices, the Conference of State Court Administrators and most other major court organizations to conduct a national conference on building public trust in the justice system on May 13-15, 1999, in Washington, D.C.; and

WHEREAS, this conference will serve as a catalyst and focal point for the many initiatives that are being taken in the states to foster public confidence in the courts and the justice system; and

WHEREAS, this conference is an important step in the process of institutionalizing ongoing and effective efforts to achieve the goals set forth in this resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices is committed to implementing this process as a matter of the highest priority; and

WHEREAS, a broad-scale effort to build public trust by improvements in the courts and better communications requires the personal involvement of chief justices in each state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices:

- strongly supports the National Conference on Building Public Trust and Confidence in the Justice System;
- urges each chief justice, working through a broadly cross-representational committee of citizens, to lead the effort to ascertain the issues affecting public confidence in his or her state and to formulate a strategy to deal with them; and
- urges each chief justice personally to lead a state delegation to the national conference.

Adopted as proposed by the Committee on Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary of the Conference of Chief Justices in Point Clear, Alabama, at the twenty-first Midyear Meeting on January 29, 1998.