

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS

Resolution 16

In Support for the Child SAFE Act of 2004

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators recognize the importance of securing safe, permanent homes for children and the need to consider more effective means of financing the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, members of the House Ways and Means Human Resources Subcommittee have drafted the Child Safety, Adoption and Family Enhancement (Child SAFE) Act of 2004 (HR 4856), which is intended to implement some of the recommendations of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care and to provide states with more financial flexibility in utilizing federal resources to improve child welfare services, thus enhancing child safety and family permanency; and

WHEREAS, the Conferences have reviewed HR 4856 and both commend the drafters and appreciate the inclusion of additional entitlement funding for the Court Improvement Program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conferences support the increased entitlement funding for the Court Improvement Program included in the Child SAFE Act of 2004; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences encourage the drafters to include specific language in the legislation to implement four additional recommendations by the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care:

- A requirement that state child welfare agencies collaborate with the state court leadership in a meaningful way in the development of IV-E State Plans and Program Improvement Plans;

- Authorization and appropriation for \$10 million in start-up funds for the development of improved case tracking systems for courts and such sums as necessary in later years to build capacity to track and analyze caseloads;
- Authorization and appropriation for \$10 million to train court personnel, a portion of which should be designated for joint training of court personnel, child welfare agency staff and others involved in protecting and caring for children; and
- Authorization and appropriation for \$5 million to expand Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Courts, Children and Families Committee at the 56th Annual Meeting on July 29, 2004.