

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

Resolution 9

**To Effectively Address Human Trafficking of Vulnerable Children Who Come in Contact with
the Child Welfare System**

WHEREAS, human trafficking is a growing concern across our country and occurs in urban, suburban, and rural communities; and

WHEREAS, children who have experienced interpersonal trauma, family instability, isolation, and particularly children in the child welfare system, are vulnerable to being victims of trafficking; and

WHEREAS, a contributing factor to this growing problem has been the underfunding of the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, human trafficking cases involve victims who are sometimes charged with prostitution or other crimes in the adjudication of juvenile offenses related to their victimization; and

WHEREAS, Congress is considering legislation, such as the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (H.R. 4980), which would require states to: (1) develop and implement plans for screening all children coming into contact with the child welfare system for human trafficking victimization and vulnerability; (2) collect data on child victims of trafficking; (3) implement a “reasonable and prudent parent standard” to allow children in foster care to participate in school activities, extra-curricular activities, and other age-appropriate activities that would allow them to develop relationships with peers and other permanent relationships; (4) empower children ages 14 and older in foster care to participate in the development of their case plan; and (5) ensure that children aging out of foster care are provided with a copy of their birth certificates, Social Security cards, health insurance information, medical records, and driver’s licenses or state IDs; and

WHEREAS, state courts, in their oversight role, will have a responsibility to insure that state child welfare agencies are complying with these new federal responsibilities on individual cases; and

WHEREAS, while these added responsibilities will lengthen the time of court hearings, the Conferences are committed to working with Congress and the United States Department of Health and Human Services to effectively address human trafficking of vulnerable children;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators encourage Congress to enact legislation, such as H.R. 4980, to address this significant problem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Conferences urge Congress to provide adequate funding to states so they can comply with federal policy, protect vulnerable children, and prevent human trafficking; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conferences further urge Congress and the United States Department of Health and Human Services to provide adequate funding to state courts to: (1) provide training for judges and court personnel so that they understand, screen, and recognize cases involving human trafficking; (2) develop resources and best court practices; and (3) fully implement these resources and best practices.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Courts, Children, and Families Committee at the CCJ 2014 Annual Meeting.