

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

## **Resolution 2**

### **In Support of a Liaison to and Stable Funding for the Self-Represented Litigation Network**

WHEREAS, ensuring equal justice—including access to justice—for all is a fundamental obligation of the nation’s courts; and

WHEREAS, the percentage of self-represented litigants is a significant and increasing portion of many caseloads, and the courts and the bar struggle to meet the growing demand for services posed by this population; and

WHEREAS, the Conference of Chief Justices (CCJ) and the Conference of State Court Administrators (COSCA) adopted Resolution 31 in 2002 to support a leadership role for CCJ and COSCA in the development, implementation and coordination of assistance programs for self-represented litigants; and

WHEREAS, CCJ and COSCA representatives attended the Summit on the Future of Self-Represented Litigation in 2005 to review local and state initiatives to address self-represented litigant issues and set a national strategic plan for further innovation and the dissemination of best practices; and

WHEREAS, Summit participants agreed that a greater degree of coordination is needed among the network of individuals and organizations actively involved in identifying needs and national trends in the area of self-help assistance programs to leverage resources and enhance the effectiveness of individual efforts; and

WHEREAS, the Self-Represented Litigation Network (SRLN) was launched in the spring of 2006 to:

- Provide a communication network on innovations in serving self-represented litigants;
- Provide a clearinghouse of information and ideas for serving self-represented litigants;
- Cooperatively promote the national agenda on self-represented litigation, as outlined in Resolution 31 and elaborated in the 2005 Report of the Summit on Self-Represented Litigation;
- Seek and advance opportunities with and for individual members and formal and informal groups of members for projects in support of the national agenda;

- Provide, where appropriate, a voice on issues concerning self-represented litigants; and

WHEREAS, the SRLN is hosted by the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) and operates under a Memorandum of Understanding, emphasizing member flexibility in choosing activities for collaboration and support; and

WHEREAS, the SRLN includes numerous prominent judicial and access-to-justice organizations, such as the American Judges Association, American Judicature Society, California Administrative Office of the Courts, Legal Services Corporation, Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts, National Association for Court Management, National Association of IOLTA Programs, National Center for State Courts and State Justice Institute; and

WHEREAS, CCJ and COSCA's ongoing efforts to provide legitimacy to the issue of access to the courts for self-represented litigants, facilitate and support collaboration among stakeholders, and highlight the need for further action are consistent with the goals of the SRLN; and

WHEREAS, the SRLN has developed and is continuing to develop products designed to be helpful to state courts and would benefit from CCJ and COSCA promotion, including a *Directory of Court-Based Self Help Program* (a manual on how to start a self-help center) a mentoring effort open to those involved in starting or improving services to the self-represented, best practices materials, research products, education tools and events, including for judicial education, self assessment tools for courts, the [www.selfhelpsupport.org](http://www.selfhelpsupport.org) website, and materials that assist in funding the enhancement and adoption of such innovations;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that CCJ and COSCA agree to each designate a representative to serve as a liaison to Network activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that CCJ and COSCA support the efforts of the NCSC to secure funding for continued development and dissemination of resources to help courts meet the increasing demand for assistance posed by self-represented litigants and to promote funding for these programs both at the federal and state level.

Adopted at the COSCA 2007 Annual Meeting on August 1, 2007.