

RESOLUTION of the BOARD FOR JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION
of the State of Washington

WHEREAS, equal justice is fundamental to the American system of government under law; and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic bias have no place in the justice system; and

WHEREAS, facially neutral policies and practices that have a disparate impact on people of color contribute significantly to disproportionalities in the criminal and civil justice system, and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic bias distort decision-making at various stages in the criminal and civil justice system, thus contributing to disproportionality and disparate treatment in the criminal and civil justice system, and

WHEREAS, racial and ethnic bias matter in ways that are not fair, that do not advance legitimate public safety objectives, that produce disproportionality, disparate treatment and disparate impact in the criminal and civil justice system, and that undermine public trust and confidence in our legal system; and

WHEREAS, the judiciary, consistent with its obligation to administer justice fairly, efficiently and effectively, has a vital role to play in ensuring that existing and proposed rules, policies and practices are fair and do not result in racial or ethnic disproportionality and disparate impact in the criminal and civil justice system; and

WHEREAS, the Board for Judicial Administration as the policy-making body of Washington's judicial branch of government plays a leadership role to ensure fairness in the justice system,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board for Judicial Administration endorses and strongly advocates a well-coordinated effort by the judicial branch, the Washington State Bar Association, minority bar associations, law schools and interested stakeholders to accomplish the following:

- (1) Educate the public and those in the justice system on racial and ethnic disproportionality, disparate treatment and disparate impact occurring in the justice system;
- (2) Evaluate existing and proposed rules, policies and practices to determine whether they contribute to racial and ethnic disproportionality or disparate impact in the justice system, and if so, how such impacts can be avoided or corrected;
- (3) Identify corrective measures and pursue system-wide improvements in racial and ethnic fairness;
- (4) Measure and evaluate progress in addressing these issues that are critical to a fair and impartial system of justice in Washington; and
- (5) Develop and implement action plans to accomplish the objectives above to eliminate racial and ethnic disproportionality, disparate treatment and disparate impact in the justice system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board for Judicial Administration encourages the judicial branch, the Washington State Bar Association, minority bar associations, law schools and interested stakeholders to work with members of the executive and legislative branches, as appropriate, to promote the adoption of laws, policies and evidence-based practices shown to be effective in reducing racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparate impact in the criminal and civil justice system.

Approved by the Board for Judicial Administration at their July 15, 2011 meeting