



WSBA

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS

RESOLUTION URGING ADEQUATE FUNDING OF THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Whereas, funding for the judicial branch constitutes less than one percent of the state general fund and Washington State continues to rank 50th out of 50 in the state's contribution to trial court funding, and

Whereas, equal justice under law and access to justice are a fundamental commitment of government and essential to the proper operation of our democracy, and

Whereas, the Washington State Constitution directs that "justice in all cases shall be administered openly, and without unnecessary delay," and

Whereas, the Court Funding Task Force, created by the Board for Judicial Administration in 2002, recognized that trial court funding was in crisis in Washington State, and

Whereas, the Washington State Bar Association's Blue Ribbon Panel on Indigent Defense and the Washington Supreme Court's Task Force on Equal Justice Funding identified critical failures in our indigent defense and civil legal aid systems, and

Whereas, the Justice in Jeopardy Initiative was introduced beginning in the 2005 legislative session to secure adequate, stable, and long-term funding for trial court operations, indigent defense and civil legal aid, and

Whereas, our state's judicial system cannot effectively and fairly administer "justice in all cases openly, and without unnecessary delay" without adequate and stable funding for core court and court support operations, and

Whereas, state funding of the judicial branch has been reduced by more than \$18 million during the 2009-2011 biennium, not including additional "across-the-board" reductions, and

Whereas, budget constraints render the Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Public Defense, and Office of Civil Legal Aid unable to meet the needs of those providing access to justice,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved:

The Washington State Bar Association commits to the ongoing work of securing a more equitable state contribution to achieve adequate, stable and long-term funding for the trial court and court support operations, and

The Washington State Bar Association strongly urges the state and all local governments to provide the funding necessary to maintain meaningful access to our justice system without resorting to additional user fees.

Adopted by the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors on December 10, 2010.

Paula C. Littlewood

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Executive Director