

# **JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE CONFERENCE OF CHIEF JUSTICES AND CONFERENCE OF STATE COURT ADMINISTRATORS**

## **Resolution 18**

### **In Support of Increasing Public Confidence in the Criminal Justice System by Reducing the Risk of Wrongful Convictions**

WHEREAS, a part of the mission of the Conference of Chief Justices is to improve the administration of justice in the states, commonwealths and territories of the United States; and

WHEREAS, part of the mission embraces the development and advancement of policies in support of the common interests and shared values of state judicial systems regarding criminal justice; and

WHEREAS, the power of the state to restrict the freedom of persons through the criminal justice system should be respectfully exercised with the utmost care and caution; and

WHEREAS, protecting the innocent and convicting the guilty are two key goals of our constitutional criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the faithful search for new methods and practices by which we can increase reliability and accountability, and thereby public confidence, in the criminal justice system is prudent and reasonable; and

WHEREAS, the people of the United States rightly look to and expect the judiciary to safeguard and promote fairness and reliability in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, advancements in science and technology and the work of innocence projects and commissions identify and demonstrate methods of improving reliability and accountability - and thereby building public confidence - in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the wrongful conviction of an innocent person leaves the actual perpetrator free and undermines public trust and confidence in our criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, DNA evidence and recent exonerations of wrongfully convicted persons have raised public concern regarding the reliability of some criminal convictions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices supports state judicial officers and appropriate public entities in their efforts to prevent the conviction of persons charged with criminal acts they did not commit; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Conference of Chief Justices also supports the continuation and improvement of appropriate procedures for hearing and considering post-conviction claims of innocence.

Proposed by the CCJ/COSCA Public Trust and Confidence in the Judiciary Committee on August 3, 2005.