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## **RESOLUTION REGARDING DOMESTIC CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING AND COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN**

**WHEREAS**, Too often, children who are at risk for or are victims of domestic child sex trafficking or sexual exploitation move through juvenile justice and child welfare systems unidentified; and

**WHEREAS**, Victims of trafficking and exploitation can enter the delinquency or dependency systems through a variety of charges, not limited to prostitution, that may bring a victim to the court's attention, but not necessarily identify them as a victim of trafficking: Drug possession, fraud, theft, status offenses such as, running away from home, violation of curfew, or truancy; and

**WHEREAS**, Children who run away from home are at high risk of child sexual exploitation due to their mental, physical, and financial vulnerability; and

**WHEREAS**, Children who have a history of child sex abuse or those who have been in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems are at heightened risk for becoming victims of trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation; and

**WHEREAS**, Children can be victimized at any age and in urban and rural communities; and.

**WHEREAS**, Girls, boys and gender non-conforming children are affected by child sexual exploitation and are often hidden within communities and not well-served by human service and law-enforcement systems; and

**WHEREAS**, Children who have been trafficked and/or exploited have experienced severe forms of trauma; often suffering negative long-term psychological, social and physical impacts; and

**WHEREAS,** In many states youth who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation face criminal charges and incarceration. States across the nation do not have the legal framework or systems of care to sufficiently protect children from further victimization or prevent the sale and purchase of children for sex or sexually exploitative purposes; and

**WHEREAS,** Victims need access to a variety of services that one system alone may not be able to provide.

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:**

The NCJFCJ believes judges are in a unique position to prevent this form of violence against children through: Increased identification of at-risk and exploited youth in the court system; educational efforts about trafficking within a community; and stimulating community and systems collaboration and participation to create or enhance services for victims.

The NCJFCJ calls for a coordinated response to increase the effectiveness of all justice and child-serving systems, in identifying child victims of domestic sex trafficking and exploitation at the earliest stage possible and to provide services necessary for victims to heal from trauma and related harm. This response includes coordination among judicial officers to ensure that victims who are moved throughout the country are identified and served appropriately.

The NCJFCJ opposes the criminalization of victims of child sexual exploitation and supports state laws and policies that provide necessary protection for victims and penalties for buyers and traffickers.

The NCJFCJ calls upon child-serving systems to deliver evidence informed services and programming to avoid children becoming vulnerable to exploitation while in the care of the state, and after leaving care.

The NCJFCJ supports the development of specialized services and resources for victims of human trafficking from the child welfare system, delinquency system, and within the community. Services should include, but should not be limited to, a development of non-detention triage facilities and specialized placement options that are equipped to effectively address the unique trauma suffered by victims of human trafficking.

The NCJFCJ shall encourage judicial leaders to convene local

stakeholder and community groups to improve and enhance system responses to the needs of child victims of sex trafficking involved in court proceedings.

The NCJFCJ shall collaborate with allied organizations and experts across the nation to develop resources for judges and courts that seek to improve outcomes for victims who enter the court system.

*Originally adopted by the NCJFCJ Board of Trustees at their Spring Meeting, February 23, 2013, San Antonio, TX*  
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