

Staff Memorandum

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE Agenda Item 5 (d) (Consent Calendar)

<u>REQUESTED ACTION</u>: Approval of the Mission Statement of Special Committee on Immigration Representation.

Attached is the proposed Mission Statement of the Special Committee on Immigration Representation.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION REPRESENTATION

Mission Statement:

Respondents in immigration proceedings face detention, deportation and often times, permanent expulsion from the United States with no constitutional right to government-funded legal representation. Many of these immigrants have limited resources and cannot afford an attorney, leaving them unrepresented or vulnerable to unscrupulous and unauthorized individuals who exploit language barriers and exact exorbitant fees in exchange for providing incompetent and insufficient assistance. With the dramatic and rapid escalation of immigration enforcement policies and resources, efforts in providing effective and readily-available quality representation and assistance are necessary to promote a fair and just immigration court system. The dearth of adequate legal representation in immigration cases impedes an already overburdened court system, where judges are often left to fill in the gaps as they do their best to ensure that respondents receive fair treatment.

The mission and objective of the Special Committee on Immigration Representation is to examine the challenges faced by respondents and the courts in these matters, and generate a report and recommendations to improve the quality and availability of legal representation in immigration cases. The Special Committee will seek input from judges and attorneys with experience in immigration proceedings, and it will consider possible improvements to attorney training and CLE; expansion of pro bono opportunities; creation of referral services and legal orientation programs around the state to assist respondents; and implementation of written standards for representation in immigration matters.