

LAW, JUSTICE & ETHICS

Resolution LJE-08-14

CLOSING THE JUSTICE DIVIDE

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) believes that a fair justice system is paramount to bridging the racial divide that exists in our nation; and

WHEREAS, the travesties known as the “Jena 6” in Louisiana, the kidnapping and beating of Megan Williams in West Virginia, the beating and shooting of Deonte Rawlings by off duty Washington, DC Police Officers, the 50 shots fired at Sean Bell by New York Police Officers, and the death of Martin Lee Anderson at a Florida juvenile boot camp all exemplify the racial disparities that still exist in our nation; and

WHEREAS, tragedies occur on the law enforcement side as well, when Police are assaulted, shot, or critically injured in the line of duty and those offenses are either never prosecuted or are plea bargained out for cooperation with the State’s prosecutors, sending a terribly demoralizing, chilling effect upon the morale and resolve of our Police forces who place their lives in harm’s way for our protection and benefit everyday.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that NBCSL directs all member-States to review and modify their hate crime laws, the prosecution records of cases when the charge of assaulting a Police Officer was not pursued, the occurrences of overcharging toward young men of color and undercharging of their Caucasian American counterparts, the apprehension and detainment practices and training of State Police forces, and the civil rights abuse records by authorities over the past three years in each of our respective States; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this Resolution be dispatched to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, Members of Congress, House and Senate Leadership, and other elected officials as appropriate.

Sponsor: Senator Charles D. Jones (LA)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Committee on Law, Justice, & Ethics

Certified by Committee Chair: Senator Charles Jones (LA)

Ratified in Plenary Session; Ratification Date: December 14, 2007

Ratification Certified by: Representative Calvin Smyre (GA), President