

ADOPTED

AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

**COMMISSION ON HOMELESSNESS AND POVERTY
COMMISSION ON YOUTH AT RISK
COMMISSION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES

RECOMMENDATION

1 RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges
2 Congress to increase funding for programs under the
3 Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and other laws in
4 order to more effectively intervene and end homelessness
5 for youth, ages 12 through 24.

6
7 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar
8 Association urges state, local, and territorial governments
9 to revise their laws, policies and practices in light of the
10 emergence of new models and best practices in the law to
11 help runaway and homeless youth and their families,
12 including:

- 13 1)Assisting, as victims of crime, instead of arresting,
14 children who have engaged in prostitution or other
15 forms of commercial sexual exploitation; and

105B

- 16 2)Assisting, instead of arresting and using the courts to
17 unnecessarily detain, children who have been forced
18 out of their homes or who have run away from homes
19 that are abusive or neglectful; and
20 3)Ensuring that safe and loving families can be
21 supported and that reunification can occur
22 expeditiously, where appropriate, or, when
23 reunification is not possible, assisting youth to locate
24 kinship care options or clarify guardianship status
25 and find sufficient access to services provided by
26 public child welfare agencies or other community-
27 based agencies offering residential care.

28
29 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar
30 Association urges Congress, state, local, and territorial
31 governments to improve statutory definitions, as well as
32 data collection and reporting systems, in order to:

- 33 1)Assist in better defining unaccompanied, homeless
34 youth as within those categories of individuals
35 eligible for family preservation services, independent
36 living support, court orders for protection from
37 physical violence and sexual assault, and other child
38 welfare services; and
39 2)Accurately count the number of runaway and
40 homeless youth, as well as youth who are sexually
41 trafficked or otherwise victimized by commercial
42 sexual activity.

43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association, urges the Federal Government to:

- 1) Assist local communities in establishing plans to end youth homelessness, which include specific recommendations for the role of federal and state governments in abating youth homelessness, including implementation of model laws developed to address issues related to youth homelessness;
- 2) Increase coordination among the federal departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), and Justice to address the crisis of youth homelessness by identifying promising practices in housing assistance to homeless youth;
- 3) Focus on youth homelessness among those formerly in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, including offering at least 50,000 youth housing opportunities on an annual basis to these and other homeless youth; and
- 4) Enhance the integration and collective analysis of data compiled by federal, state, local, and territorial systems.