

# **PHILADELPHIA BAR ASSOCIATION RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION FOR A STATEWIDE OFFICE OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Philadelphia Bar Association has a longstanding tradition of support of alternate methods of dispute resolution to preserve the court system for disputes that truly need resolution by judge or judge and jury; and

**WHEREAS**, Philadelphia has been a national leader in innovative ways to streamline and facilitate the justice system; and

**WHEREAS**, Pennsylvania has lagged behind other states in its institutional support for mediation, arbitration and other Alternative Dispute Resolution ("ADR") techniques; and

**WHEREAS**, when properly used, ADR can provide significant costs savings for both the Court system and litigants and result in more satisfactory resolution of disputes; and

**WHEREAS**, many novel and effective ADR programs are working successfully in parts of Pennsylvania but there is no mechanism to expand their use into other areas of the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS**, an Advisory Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution of the Joint State Government Commission, with leadership from several Philadelphia Bar members, has issued a report recommending legislation for the creation of a Statewide Office of Dispute Resolution (<http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us>); and

**WHEREAS**, the Advisory Committee concluded that a properly funded statewide office, similar to those in other states, would encourage and oversee the use of effective ADR modalities to make better use of the justice system; and

**WHEREAS**, among other things, a Statewide Office of Dispute Resolution would encourage and facilitate the development, use, coordination, support and evaluation of high-quality affordable alternative dispute resolution programs and services, including education, training and research about alternative dispute resolution, and

**WHEREAS**, a Statewide Office of Dispute Resolution would be able to recommend improvements in alternative dispute resolution programs and services, and

**WHEREAS**, a Statewide Office of Dispute Resolution could coordinate efforts of the judiciary, bar, legislature, executive, and other entities affected by ADR programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on ADR was to establish as a statewide office of dispute resolution as a fully-funded independent agency within