



American Bar Association  
**News Release**



**Release: Immediate**

Contact: Nancy Cowger Slonim  
Phone: 312/988-6132  
E-Mail: [slonimn@staff.abanet.org](mailto:slonimn@staff.abanet.org)  
Online: <http://www.abanews.org>

**DELAWARE DELEGATION TO PARTICIPATE IN ABA SUMMIT ON STATE GOVERNMENT INTER-BRANCH COOPERATION UPHOLDING FAIR AND IMPARTIAL STATE COURTS**

CHICAGO, April 15, 2009—Delaware is among more than 30 states that will participate in an American Bar Association national summit to foster cooperation and communication among the three branches of state government, and creative approaches to meeting their respective responsibilities related to the justice system.

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele will head a state delegation attending the working summit, "Justice Is the Business of Government," to build strategies to dismantle natural tensions between branches of state government that imperil their ability to deliver on public expectations of justice. Participants will develop responses to challenges all branches that relate to the justice system, including such issues as the costs of incarceration, unequal access to and inadequate representation in the legal system, substance abuse services and mental health intervention. The summit will take a long view toward obtaining adequate resources for courts and related services throughout state government during both improving and declining economic cycles.

The National Summit on The Critical Role of Fair and Impartial State Courts will convene May 7-9 in Charlotte, North Carolina, under the leadership of ABA President H. Thomas Wells Jr.; Sandra Day O'Connor, retired justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Mary Campbell McQueen, president and chief executive officer of the National Center for State Courts. Former Georgia Gov. Roy E. Barnes, Speaker Joe Hackney of the North Carolina House of Representatives and other leaders from each branch of state government will participate in workshops and panel presentations, keying up problems and laying out potential solutions. Other faculty will include state supreme court justices and heads of state agencies.

Delegations from each participating state will be joined by representatives of national organizations of state court officials and legislators, bar associations and others actively interested in the adequate funding of the justice system. They will compare public expectations of the justice system with those of summit participants, and hope to increase and maintain public respect for fairness and impartiality in courts. The delegations will work to identify challenges rising from natural tensions among the branches of government and learn about approaches from around the country that have succeeded in reducing those tensions, strategies like performance and workload measures, strategic planning, ride-along programs, opportunities for legislators to become more familiar with court procedures and systems and justifications for needed resources. Each team will consider their own state's situation in the context of those issues.

Rounding out the Delaware delegation will be Patricia W. Griffin, state court administrator; State Rep. Brad Bennett; State Sen. Harris B. McDowell III; and Thomas McGonigle, chief of staff to Gov. Jack Markell. The ABA and NCSC are providing limited travel reimbursement for certain government employees.

Complete details on the summit and information about justice system funding issues in many states are available at <http://www.abavideo.org/ABA2831/>.

With more than 400,000 members, the American Bar Association is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world. As the national voice of the legal profession, the ABA works to improve the administration of justice, promotes programs that assist lawyers and judges in their work, accredits law schools, provides continuing legal education, and works to build public understanding around the world of the importance of the rule of law.

- 30 -

**This distribution list is a service to the news media from the American Bar Association Division for Media Relations and Communication Services. Your e-mail address will only be used within the ABA and its entities. We do not sell or rent e-mail addresses to anyone outside the ABA. To change your e-mail listing or be removed from our distribution lists, please contact the Media Relations Department at 312/988-6171 or [abanews@abanet.org](mailto:abanews@abanet.org).**

To review our privacy statement, [click here](#).