



WSBA

WASHINGTON STATE BAR ASSOCIATION BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Resolution Requesting the American Bar Association to Develop a Program to Increase Public Understanding of the United States Government

Whereas, an ABA 2005 public opinion poll found:

1. Just over half (55%) of Americans can correctly identify the three branches of government; and
2. Less than half (48%) of Americans can correctly identify the meaning of the concept of separation of powers; and
3. More than one-third of Americans (36%) are unable to correctly identify the principle of checks and balances; and
4. Less than half (48%) of respondents correctly identified the role of the judiciary in the federal government.

Whereas, most states do not include civics or civics concepts in public school curricula; and

Whereas, liberty and our democracy depend on a citizenry that understands and exercises their right to be self governing; and

Whereas, all 16 states of the Western States Bar Conference on March 25, 2006 agreed that educating citizens about their rights and duties in our democracy is an essential national focus;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved That:

The WSBA urges the American Bar Association, in cooperation with the judiciary, state and local bar associations and civic groups, to develop and implement an overall national, strategic, research-based framework of sustainable policies, programs and strategies to address and improve (a) public understanding of our system of government; (b) the role each branch of government, particularly the judiciary, plays in our democracy; (c) the significance of separation of powers; and (d) the importance of the rule of law.

Adopted by the Washington State Bar Association Board of Governors on April 21, 2006.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "M. Janice Michels".

M. Janice Michels
Executive Director

