

**2016 ANNUAL REPORT
IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE**

*Prepared by Joan Churchill, Chair
September 28, 2016*

Committee Membership

Chair: Joan Churchill,

Members: Victoria Ghartey, Trish Hurst, Tamila Ipema, Carol King,
Rosalind Malloy, Dana Marks, and Renee Renner

Advisors: John Martin, Steve Weller

Committee Meetings

The Committee met in person on Saturday, May 28 during the IAWJ Biennial/NAWJ Midyear in Washington DC. *We* met again by conference call on August 24, 2016

Activities for 2016

Unaccompanied Juvenile Migrants & Special Immigrant Juvenile Status

We continue, to focus, in collaboration the NAWJ Juvenile Justice Committee, on the topic of unaccompanied juvenile migrants seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile [SIJ] status and other forms of immigration relief. We agreed that we should

1. Offer to prepare a program on the topic for the Atlanta 2017 Annual conference, with the objective of sharing with judges handling cases in the state system what happens to the cases in the federal system after the state judges make the relevant findings for Special Immigration Juvenile status under the Immigration & Nationality Act.
2. Encourage the Vice-President for Districts, both current and incoming, to encourage the Districts to hold workshops in their various jurisdictions of both state and federal immigration judges, in person or by conference call, to discuss the process used in their respective jurisdictions regarding the cases involving unaccompanied foreign minors. The Committee would like to

receive reports summarizing the discussions so we can compile a report comparing the state by state variations.

Committee Chair Churchill also been reaching out to other groups regarding the topic.

1. She is collaborating with the Human Trafficking Committee (of which Committee she is also a member) to coordinate activities regarding protection of unaccompanied juvenile migrants from becoming victims of trafficking.
2. She has prepared a proposal for the American Bar Association [ABA] National Conference of Administrative Law Judiciary [NCALJ] (on whose Executive Committee she serves), to seek ABA staff assistance with research regarding the variations in State practices of cases involving unaccompanied foreign minors seeks findings predicate to applications for SIJ status. Her proposal is pending consideration by that body.
3. She participated in the ABA cross training video for state and immigration judges demonstrating their respective responsibilities imposed by the Immigration and Nationality Act in handling cases of unaccompanied alien minors.

Position Statements

We are considering possibly proposing resolutions on the topics of

1. appointment of counsel for unrepresented unaccompanied juveniles in immigration court proceedings
2. the importance of the work of Immigration Judges, in light of the mischaracterization of immigration judges as “low level employees” of the U.S. Department of Justice in testimony given by a high level official of that Department in a recent lawsuit.

Both of these topics are still under discussion, as we exchange documents and invite feed back by email from committee members.