

SEARCH Resolution 78-03

Of the Membership Group of SEARCH, The National Consortium for Justice Information and Statistics

April 27, 1978

Reporting of Justice Statistics

WHEREAS the federal government has proposed to establish a Bureau of Justice Statistics within the Department of Justice, and

WHEREAS the Bureau, in order to satisfy its requirements to compile, analyze and disseminate information about crime, criminality and the administration of justice, will make demands of state and local justice agencies, and

WHEREAS SEARCH Group, a consortium of the states, has been a leader in developing programs for the collection and utilization of information and statistics in the interest of a more effective justice system,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Membership Group of SGI supports the concept of a single organization to consolidate existing national statistical series, to develop improved programs of the compilation of reporting of justice statistics, and to assist states in the collection and utilization of statistical information concerning crime and the administration of justice, provided that:

1. Such a Bureau initially limit its scope to (a) justice statistics that emanate from federal agencies and (b) those justice statistics derived from state and local agency operations for which no national series exists.
2. Existing series of national justice statistics be phased into Bureau operations only after the Bureau has demonstrated an ability to produce timely statistics that accurately reflect the functioning of those areas enumerated under number 1 above.
3. The Bureau accommodate to statistics derived as a by-product from operational information systems designed to meet the responsibilities and obligations of state and local agencies.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the federal government shall make no new demands of the states for statistical reporting without providing for commensurate assistance, and until the following conditions have been satisfied:

1. State and local representation be included in an advisory capacity to Bureau operations.
2. The Bureau establish proper relationships with existing state coordinating mechanisms, such as Statistical Analysis Centers.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that the Membership Group of SGI urges the federal government to plan carefully for the acceptance, screening and interpretation of justice statistics so as to assure high quality data, and to establish appropriate mechanisms for handling sensitive information where such information could identify individuals.