

Resolution 1
In Support of a Policy Statement Regarding Judicial Compensation

WHEREAS, a fundamental principle of our democracy is that the public is entitled to justice rendered by a qualified, fair and impartial judiciary; and

WHEREAS, inadequate judicial compensation threatens the ability to attract and retain qualified, experienced lawyers drawn from every segment of the profession; and

WHEREAS, United States Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., in his first Report on the Federal Judiciary, identified inadequate judicial compensation as a "direct threat to judicial independence" and "a constitutional crisis that threatens to undermine the strength and independence of the federal judiciary;" and

WHEREAS, for many state judiciaries the situation described by the Chief Justice is even more serious, with compensation having remained inadequate and stagnant over long periods; and

WHEREAS, a system requiring the judiciary periodically to seek salary increases draws the judiciary into friction with the political branches;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Conference of Chief Justices urges:

1. That the Task Force on Politics and Judicial Elections formulate a policy statement, including effective mechanisms and criteria for use in determining judicial compensation levels; and
2. That the National Center for State Courts continue to provide the state judiciaries with its comprehensive salary survey and augment that information to include both successful and unsuccessful efforts to increase judicial compensation and relevant comparisons to positions within and without state government.

Adopted as proposed by the CCJ Task Force on Politics and Judicial Selection at the 59th Annual Meeting on August 1, 2007.