

The American Board of Trial Advocates Supports Salary Increase for Federal Judges

DALLAS, March 5 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Board of Trial Advocates, a national organization of preeminent trial lawyers, strongly supports a substantial increase in the salaries paid to federal judges.

"A competent, highly qualified and fairly compensated federal judiciary is vital to preserving our justice system in the United States," said Lewis R. Sifford, ABOTA president. "Action by our government is long overdue, and further inaction threatens the foundation of our judicial systems as well as the fair administration of justice."

ABOTA supports U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts' recent request for a substantial increase in judicial salaries, Sifford added. In his year-end report on the federal judiciary, Chief Justice Roberts described the compensation situation as reaching a crisis point and that judicial salaries have dropped below any reasonable measure of what is appropriate.

ABOTA has urged Chairman Patrick J. Leahy of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to take immediate steps to substantially increase judicial salaries and thereby preserve the integrity of an independent judiciary, according to Sifford. ABOTA believes that America's traditional jury system, both criminal and civil, is the one system of jurisprudence that guarantees necessary safeguards for the protection of person and property.

Preserving the quality and independence of the judiciary has been a hallmark of ABOTA's efforts over the years. As early as 1997, ABOTA urged the restoration of compensation levels to their past equivalence, in terms of real income, for justices and judges of the United States courts. ABOTA also recommended changing the procedure for adjusting future compensation. In 2000, ABOTA recommended that the U.S. Congress increase the funding of the judicial system and that there be increased salaries paid to those who serve as judges.

Founded in 1958, ABOTA is a national association of experienced trial lawyers and judges. ABOTA and its members are dedicated to the preservation and promotion of the civil jury trial right provided by the 7th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The Foundation of ABOTA is an affiliated charitable entity, the mission of which is to support the purposes of ABOTA through education and research. ABOTA membership consists of more than 6,300 lawyers and judges spread among 93 Chapters in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. ABOTA publishes *Voir Dire* magazine, which features in-depth articles on current and historical issues related to constitutional rights, in particular the 7th Amendment right to trial by jury.

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