



Leadership Conference on Civil Rights

1629 K Street, NW
10th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20006

Phone: 202-466-3311
Fax: 202-466-3435
www.civilrights.org

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June 25, 2007

Support a Salary Increase for Federal Judges

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
SR-433 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
SH-311 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
SH-711 Hart Senate Office Building
United State Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
SR-172 Russell Senate Office Building
United State Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), the nation's oldest, largest, and most diverse civil and human rights coalition, with nearly 200 member organizations, we join with legal professional organizations, civil rights groups and prominent jurists in support of greater compensation for federal judges. Salaries for senior law professors and deans are double those of federal judges, and partners at law firms receive compensation many times higher than judicial salaries. Increased salaries will allow the federal bench to continue to draw from the widest possible range of highly qualified individuals.

LCCR has been a vigorous advocate for greater diversity on the federal bench. Judicial salaries present an obstacle to greater judicial diversity because minorities in the legal profession are often burdened with greater financial obligations, such as repaying student loans, supporting extended families, and ensuring that their children will have adequate educational opportunities. These difficulties are especially pronounced in large cities, where many minority lawyers live and practice law. Costs of living in these regions can be significantly higher, and judicial salaries may place judges at an even greater disadvantage compared with the top practicing lawyers in these urban areas. In fact, the Asian American Justice Center, a member of the LCCR Executive Committee, in a letter supporting a salary increase, noted that many minority lawyers have declined to seek judicial appointments in part because of the issue of judicial compensation.

An increase in judicial salaries is long overdue, and LCCR urges Congress to act promptly to institute a salary raise for federal judges. Should you require further information or have any questions, please contact Paul Edenfield, Counsel and Policy Analyst, at 202/263-2852, regarding this or any issue.



Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
President & CEO

Nancy Zirkin
Vice President / Director of Public Policy