



**State of Connecticut  
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

**Testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice  
Joint Committee on Judiciary  
March 9, 2012**

**In Support of:  
S.B. No. 31: An Act Establishing a Commission on Judicial Compensation**

The Division of Criminal Justice supports S.B. No. 31, An Act Establishing a Commission on Judicial Compensation. We commend the Governor for recommending this legislation, which would establish a commission to examine and make recommendations regarding the compensation of the Judges of the Supreme Court, Appellate Court and Superior Court.

Currently, the responsibility for reviewing the compensation of judges and making recommendations rests with the Compensation Commission for Elected State Officials and Judges established under section 2-9a of the General Statutes. This commission is charged not only with reviewing the salaries and other compensation of judges, but those for the statewide constitutional officers and the members of the General Assembly. Even a cursory review of history leaves little doubt that political considerations have weighed heavily in deciding the fate of the recommendations advanced by this commission. There is a distinct difference, however, between those who serve in elected capacity at the will of the voters in the executive and legislative branches and those who serve in the judiciary.

We have historically treated members of the judiciary differently. Federal judges serve lifetime appointments, in part to separate them from politics. We in Connecticut long ago made the wise decision to appoint rather than elect our judges, again to separate the judicial from the political. Yet it would seem that under the current Compensation Commission the recommendations on judicial salaries have been caught up along with those of the elected state officers and legislators or have simply fallen by the wayside. The process proposed in S.B. No. 31 is a logical extension of our long history of treating the judiciary differently and recognizing that we want our judges to be apart from politics. The simple reality is that we must base compensation on a factual analysis that recognizing the critical role that judges play in the administration of justice and as such the protection of public safety, individual rights and the common good. S.B. No. 31 offers an excellent foundation for an analytical rather than political process to establish compensation levels that support our efforts to attract the best and brightest to the bench.