



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## **OLR BACKGROUNDER: COMPENSATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS, 2002-2011**

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This report summarizes the recommendations for judicial compensation made by the Commission on Compensation of Elected State Officers and Judges from 2002 through 2011.

### **THE COMPENSATION COMMISSION**

Prior to the creation of the Commission on Judicial Compensation by PA 12-93, the Commission on Compensation of Elected State Officers and Judges was charged with recommending to the General Assembly legislative proposals for salary, expenses, pension, workers' compensation, and any other benefits to be paid to the state's judges (except probate judges), constitutional officers, and members of the General Assembly (CGS § [2-9a\(b\)](#)). The law required the commission to submit recommendations during every odd-numbered year, but also gave it discretion to make recommendations during even-numbered years.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON JUDICIAL COMPENSATION**

Over the ten years preceding the enactment of PA 12-93, the commission recommended a specific increase in judicial salaries once, when it recommended a 6% increase in 2004. The legislature subsequently enacted legislation increasing judicial salaries by 5.5% in 2005, 2006, and 2007. In years when the commission made

recommendations from 2007 through 2011, it recommended that judicial salaries be automatically increased at the same rate as increases received by state managers, however the legislature took no action on these recommendations.

Table 1 shows the commission's 2002 - 2011 recommendations for judicial compensation and subsequent legislative action.

**Table 1: Compensation Commission Recommendations, 2002-2011.**

<i><b>Year</b></i>	<i><b>Commission Recommendation</b></i>	<i><b>Legislative Action</b></i>
2002	The commission reported its satisfaction with the current and projected compensation levels of the positions under its jurisdiction. It recommended a minor change to increase the earnings cap for certain senior judges and state referees. (Under the law at the time, retired judges serving as senior judges or state referees could not earn more than the salary at which they retired if they began serving as a judge on or after January 1, 1981.)	PA 02-132 increased the earnings cap for senior judges and state referees from the salary at which they retired to the salary currently being earned in the position from which they retired.
2003	The commission reported its satisfaction with the current and projected compensation levels for the positions under its jurisdiction. It recommended no further changes in light of the state's budget circumstances.	None.
2004	The commission recommended increasing judges salaries by 6% (to \$132,500) effective July 1, 2004.	PA 04-2, May Special Session, increased judicial salaries 5.5% each year in 2005, 2006, and 2007.
2005	The commission recommended no salary changes given (1) the recently approved raises for judges, (2) the anticipated budget deficit, and (3) that no agency or individual proposed a compensation increase before the commission.	None.

**Table 1 (continued)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Commission Recommendation</b>	<b>Legislative Action</b>
2007	The commission recommended changing the method of setting salary increases from one that requires a statutory change to one that provides for automatic increases equal to the average salary increase for state managers.	None.
2008	The commission recommended that salaries for judges and family support magistrates and the per diem rates paid to family support magistrate referees, senior judges, and judge trial referees automatically increase based on the average salary increases (excluding longevity payments) for state managers.	None.
2009	The commission recommended that salaries for judges and family support magistrates and the per diem rates paid to family support magistrate referees, senior judges, and judge trial referees automatically increase based on the average salary increases (excluding longevity payments) for state managers. It acknowledged that such raises for managers were not likely due to the state's budget crisis.	None.
2011	The commission again recommended that salaries for judges and family support magistrates and the per diem rates paid to family support magistrate referees, senior judges, and judge trial referees automatically increase based on the average salary increases (excluding longevity payments) for state managers. It also acknowledged that such raises were not likely due to the state's severe budget crisis.	None.

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