



COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL COMPENSATION

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Thursday, October 29, 2020
10:00 am via Zoom

1. Convene Meeting

- The meeting was convened by Chairman George Jepsen at 10 A.M.
- Chairman Jepsen introduced the three new members:
 - John Kennedy, Senate Minority Leader's appointee
 - Anthony Marone, House Minority Leader's appointee
 - Lincoln Woodard, House Speaker's appointee

2. Remarks by the Chair

- The minutes from the previous meeting, October 22, were approved unanimously.

3. Presentation by Chief Justice Robinson

- Chief Justice Robinson introduced himself and presented the Judicial Branch's report. He began with a recap of the 2013 Commission recommendations.
- He then moved on to the seven statutory factors when making compensation recommendations and made comments about each:
 1. State's ability to fund increases
 - Though Connecticut is in economic difficult times, the Chief Justice believes that the state can afford modest costs of adequately compensating judges
 2. Inflation rate:
 - If judges had received cost-of-living increases based on Consumer Price Index, then they would be earning \$10,776 more
 3. Compensation of other states' and federal judges:
 - When factoring the high cost-of-living in the northeast, Connecticut Superior Court judges' adjusted salary ranked 44th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia

- Federal District Court judges currently earn \$216,400 and have lifetime appointments. They earn 25% more than Connecticut Superior Court judges
- 4. State's interest in attracting highly qualified and experienced attorneys
 - Many private attorneys are willing to accept a lower salary because of this commitment; however, they should not be expected to accept a salary that does not keep pace with inflation
- 5. Compensation adjustments for state employees
 - Judges' salaries have not kept pace with the salaries of others working in state government
 - The average increase for the past five years is 0.6% and judges have not received an increase in four of the last five years.
- 6. Levels of compensation received by attorneys
 - National Association for Law Placement published the *2019 Associate Salary Survey*, which shows that the overall salary for lawyers with eight years of experience was \$204,000
 - That is \$31,337 more than an experienced Connecticut Superior Court judge earns
- 7. State's overall economic climate
 - Although it is difficult to predict what the state's economy will look like in the next four years, the Commission has the authority to recommend reasonable increases for judicial officers

4. Recap and discussion of factors for consideration under [CGS § 51-47c](#)

- Chairman Jepsen and the commission discussed the invited guests for the next meeting on November 12 at 10 A.M.
 - Speakers will be divided into 3 groups:
 1. Office of Fiscal Analysis (15-20 minutes)
 2. Judge related stakeholders: Judges Association, Judicial Selection, Federal Judiciary (10 minutes each)
 3. Bar Associations: CT Bar Association, Crawford Black Bar Association, Hispanic Bar Association, Asian Bar Association (five minutes each)
 - Speaking portion will last between an hour and 15 minutes and an hour and 45 minutes
 - Discussion between commission members about who to invite
 - Commissioner John Kennedy suggested also inviting the Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Trial Lawyers Association, and Civil Defense Lawyers Association
 - Chairman Jepsen agreed to add these three additional groups to the Bar Association group of speakers
 - Discussion about whether speakers will be given direction about what to speak on
 - Chairman Jepsen announced that each group will be sent a copy of the statute and the speakers will speak on what they feel is relevant
- Chairman Jepsen discussed providing research into the seven statutory factors that the commission is expected to base their opinions on

- Looking for volunteers from the commission to assist staff regarding the seven statutory factors (volunteers should call the chairman or staff if they want to volunteer)
- Meeting Thanksgiving week to express findings
- Chairman Jepsen discussed two issues with the statute:
 1. Existing compensation
 2. Seven criteria to evaluate compensation and what it should be, and the categories of judges

5. Adjournment

- Chairman Jepsen adjourned the meeting at 10:45 A.M.