



American Bar Association

FEDERAL JUDICIAL COMPENSATION POLICIES

February 2007:

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association endorses recent statement by the Chief Justice of the United States that the failure to raise judicial pay is now a “crisis that threatens to undermine the strength and independence of the federal Judiciary.”

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association urges Congress to take immediate action to enact a substantial pay increase for the federal judiciary, consistent with the recent analysis by Paul Volcker, former chair of the National Commission on the Public Service, which recognized the inadequacy of federal judicial salaries and that increases in federal judicial salaries have not even kept pace with increases in average American worker wages.

February 2003:

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association supports the recommendations contained in the 2003 Report of the National Commission on the Public Service urging Congress to enact an immediate and significant increase in federal judicial salaries and break the statutory link between Congressional and judicial salaries.

February 1998:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association supports the following principles to preserve and strengthen federal judicial independence and separation of powers, derived from the July 4, 1997 Report of the ABA Commission on Separation of Powers and Judicial Independence, *An Independent Judiciary*:

...4. Congress should de-link congressional pay from judicial pay and make judicial salaries subject to the same periodic and automatic cost-of-living adjustments granted career federal employees. ...

February 1994:

RESOLVED, that salary levels of federal, state, and territorial judges and the administrative judiciary should be reviewed on a regular, periodic basis and adjusted to ensure that judicial salaries are not, in effect, diminished by increases in the cost of living.

February 1989:

RESOLVED, that the compensation currently paid to the federal judiciary is grossly insufficient, inadequate and inappropriate;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that a crisis will arise in the nation’s justice system if immediate steps are not now taken at least to restore the erosion which has occurred in judicial salaries in the past two decades;

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the American Bar Association urges Congress to permit the judicial salaries recommended by Presidents Reagan and Bush and the 1988 Commission on Executive, Legislative and Judicial Salaries to go into effect.

December 1984:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association urges Congress not to impose a freeze on federal judicial salaries and to enact a minimum 3.5 percent cost of living adjustment for the federal judiciary.

August 1981:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association recommends that the salaries of the justices of the highest courts of the States should be substantially equal to the salaries paid to judges of the United States

courts of appeal, and the salaries of State trial judges of courts of general jurisdiction should substantially equal the salaries paid to judges of the United States district courts.

August 1980:

RESOLVED, that the American Bar Association urges federal and state governments to adjust compensation schedules for judicial officers to provide relief from the cumulative reductions in the value of their earnings as the result of inflation.

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