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May 4, 2007

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Re: Compensation of Federal Judges

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of The Bar Association of San Francisco ("BASF"), I write in support of Chief Justice John Roberts's call for an immediate increase in the compensation of federal judges. As the 2006 Year-End Report on the Federal Judiciary notes, the average American worker's wages have increased approximately 19% since 1969 after adjusting for inflation, while federal judicial pay has actually declined approximately 25% over the same period.

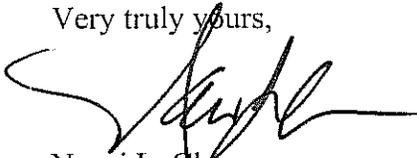
Indeed, federal district court judges today earn less than some law school graduates earn in their first year of private practice, and substantially less than deans of U.S. law schools.

In calling for an immediate and substantial increase in judicial pay, the National Commission on the Public Service (the Volcker Commission) concluded a few years ago that “judicial salaries are the most egregious example of the failure of federal compensation policies.” This is strikingly obvious when you consider that judicial salaries lag behind the salaries of other federal attorneys with whom judges might be compared.

There is no doubt that this is a grave problem that must be addressed immediately. Our judiciary is an essential guardian of our freedom, and we need the most capable people to serve, without regard to their personal financial capabilities. We also want judges to consider the bench to be an insulated position from which they are free to make unpopular but necessary decisions to uphold the Constitution. But when judges expect that they will have to leave the bench eventually for financial reasons, the independence of the judiciary is compromised.

We understand that federal judicial salaries have been historically linked to the salaries of members of Congress, which hinders Congress’s ability to take immediate action. To resolve this issue, BASF urges Congress to consider delinking federal judicial pay from congressional pay so that federal judicial salaries may be restored to levels that are fair and reasonable. BASF further urges Congress to promptly vote a substantial increase in the compensation of federal judges.

Very truly yours,



Nanci L. Clarence
President, Bar Association of San Francisco
Clarence & Dyer LLP

cc: James C. Duff, Director
Office of Public Affairs
Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts
Washington, D.C. 20544