



Greater Grand Forks County Bar Association

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January 11, 2023

Appropriations Committee

RE: **HB 1002**

Dear Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

My name is Diane Schull. I am the president of the Greater Grand Forks County Bar Association. Our organization consists of attorneys who live in and practice in Grand Forks County, North Dakota.

I am writing to you regarding the budget for the judicial branch for upcoming biennium. Specifically, I am writing to urge you to support an increase in judicial salaries. North Dakota's judicial pay is ranked 40th in the nation and is far below comparable positions in state government. North Dakota judges are also asked to handle substantially more work with less support and with less pay than judges in other comparable states.

While judicial salaries generally increase by a percentage each year, these incremental pay increases are not keeping pace with inflation. These factors have created a situation where judicial recruitment and retention is at risk. The state will have difficulty in filling judicial positions when joining the bench is considered to be a hardship rather than a career goal. The most qualified and competent attorneys in the state will be dissuaded from becoming a judge if the financial trade-off is too high when compared to their earning potential in private practice. I have personally had conversations with attorneys whom I believe would make great judges and am aware that they, although may be interested in becoming a judge, are not willing to take a salary cut in order to do so.

Therefore, on behalf of the Greater Grand Forks County Bar Association, I urge you to support a pay increase for the judges and justices of the state of North Dakota. By doing so, you will recognize the great work already being done by the state's judiciary branch and will encourage recruitment and retention of judges into the future. This will help to guaranty that the citizens of

the state will have access to the most competent, fair, and qualified judges when they need their day in court.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane L. Schull". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Diane L. Schull
President, Greater Grand Forks County Bar Association