

Cass County Bar Association

President: Adam Justinger
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Members of the Government Operations Division of Senate Appropriations

Re: HB 1002

Dear Members of the Government Operations Division of Senate Appropriations,

My name is Adam Justinger. I am the president of the Cass County Bar Association. Our organization consists of attorneys who live in and practice in Cass County, North Dakota. I am writing to you in regards to the budget for the judicial branch for the upcoming biennium. Specifically, I am writing to urge you to support an increase in judicial salaries. North Dakota's judicial pay is ranked 43rd 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.

Therefore, on behalf of the Cass 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,

Adam Justinger
President, Cass County Bar Association