

**Increasing Judicial Compensation  
Written Testimony of the Connecticut Bar Association  
by Amy Lin Meyerson, CBA President  
Hearing of the Connecticut Judicial Compensation Commission  
November 12, 2020**

Esteemed Chairperson Jepsen and distinguished members of the Commission, my name is Amy Lin Meyerson. I am the President of the Connecticut Bar Association (CBA), the preeminent voluntary organization of lawyers and legal professionals in Connecticut.

I have a long history of leadership and service to the Legal community, as follows:

- Past President of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) and the NAPABA Law Foundation
- Past Chair of the American Bar Association (ABA) Solo, Small Firm and General Practice Division
- Member, ABA House of Delegates and the ABA Scope and Correlation of Work Committee
- Vice-Chair of the ABA Representative and Observers to the United Nations and the ABA Deputy Alternate Representative to the UN
- Founder and Past President of the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- Graduate of Duke University and the University of Connecticut School of Law
- Solo practitioner of business, general corporate, and nonprofit law in Weston, CT

Thank you for providing the Connecticut Bar Association with the opportunity to testify before you today on the important topic of judicial compensation in Connecticut. I present this testimony in support of increasing judicial compensation.

A fundamental principle of our democracy is that the public is entitled to justice rendered by a qualified, independent, fair, and impartial judiciary. US Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts said in support of increasing judicial pay “I simply ask once again for a moment’s reflection on how America would look in the absence of a skilled and independent Judiciary. Consider the critical role of our courts in preserving individual liberty, promoting commerce, protecting property, and ensuring that every person who appears in an American court can expect fair and impartial justice.”<sup>1</sup>

The disparity in compensation between public service and private law practice is well documented. Our judges literally pay a price when they choose a path of servant leadership. Judicial compensation that is fair and appropriate enables the state to attract and retain qualified, experienced, and diverse lawyers drawn from every segment of the legal profession to a career in judicial service.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.supremecourt.gov/publicinfo/year-end/2007year-endreport.pdf>

The Connecticut Bar Association is committed to supporting the needs of the courts and our Judicial system. As the Coronavirus pandemic severely limited traditional means of access to our courts, our CBA members worked with Chief Justice Robinson and members of Connecticut's judiciary to find creative, alternative ways to provide timely legal services and new avenues to gain access to justice.

Connecticut judges handle a large volume of complex cases across all of the dockets filed by economically and racially diverse constituents. At the end of FY2019, Fifty-Two Thousand Four Hundred Fifty-Two (52,452) cases were pending on the Civil Docket alone.<sup>2</sup> The number of pending cases continues to rise as a result of the pandemic, especially those involving our most vulnerable neighbors who need access to basic human necessities for their personal security, family stability, food and housing, income protection, and medical treatment.

Additional challenges for our judges accompany the increasing number of *pro se* litigants appearing before them. While managing their full dockets, our judges also employ the skill, patience, and efficiency to guide litigants through the judicial system without the benefit and assistance of counsel for these *pro se* litigants.

According to an independent study performed by the National Center for State Courts that collects judicial salary data twice a year, as of July 2020, Connecticut judicial pay ranks 40th in the nation when adjusted for Connecticut's high cost of living.<sup>3</sup> By comparison, New York ranks 5<sup>th</sup>.

Judicial pay is stagnant in that Connecticut's judges have gone without any implemented salary adjustment since 2015. Additionally, Connecticut's judicial compensation has been eroded by the aggregate inflation of 7.7% from 2015 to 2019.<sup>4</sup>

Thank you again for this opportunity to address the Commission and to submit written testimony. On behalf of the Connecticut Bar Association, I urge the Commission and the Legislature to support increasing judicial compensation because our judges are the backbone of a fair, effective, and efficient judicial system.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://jud.ct.gov/statistics/civil/CaseDoc\\_1819.pdf](https://jud.ct.gov/statistics/civil/CaseDoc_1819.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncsc.org/salarytracker>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/data/consumerpriceindexhistorical\\_northeast\\_table.htm](https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/data/consumerpriceindexhistorical_northeast_table.htm)