

**STATE OF TEXAS**

**RESOLUTION**

**of the**

**TEXAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL**

**Judicial Compensation and Benefits Committee Cost of Living Adjustment  
Recommendations**

WHEREAS, the Texas Judicial Council was created under Chapter 71, Texas Government Code and is charged with improving the administration of justice; and

WHEREAS, the Council has charged its Judicial Compensation and Benefits Committee with studying judicial compensation and benefits; and

WHEREAS, judicial compensation is incredibly important to attract the most highly qualified individuals in the state, from a diversity of life and professional experiences, to serve in the judiciary without unreasonable economic hardship and with judicial independence unaffected by financial concerns; and

WHEREAS, in September 2025 the base salary of a district court judge, \$175,000, as set by the Texas Legislature, went into effect; and

WHEREAS, during the past 35 years the base pay has been adjusted only eight times; and

WHEREAS, the frequency and amount of increases to the base pay have been unpredictable; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the inconsistent adjustments, since 1999 there have been double digit increases needed to “play catch up”; and

WHEREAS, just before the most recent increase, the base pay had fallen behind every state except West Virginia; and

WHEREAS, according to the OCA Report on Judicial Salaries and Turnover, the number of judges voluntarily leaving office has steadily increased since 2005; and

WHEREAS, when looking at the various factors influencing a judge's decision, more than 60% of respondents indicated that salary was a major factor in declining to seek reelection in the most recent election period; and

WHEREAS, this was up from 26% from the previous election period, and more than half of these judges indicated that a change in salary would have influenced their decision to leave; and

WHEREAS, Texas needs a mechanism to more consistently address judicial compensation and remedy the inconsistent and unpredictable nature of judicial pay increases; and

WHEREAS, Texas has adjusted the base pay of a District Judge only once in the past 10 years while the average amongst the other 10 most populous states was 7.2 times; and

WHEREAS, 28 other states and the federal government have a mechanism to more regularly address judicial compensation; and

WHEREAS, the base pay of a Texas District Judge ranks 39<sup>th</sup> in the nation, falling from 34<sup>th</sup> after the 25% increase in FY 2026; and

WHEREAS, instituting a permanent cost of living adjustment to the base pay of a District Court Judge tied to the Consumer Price Index would create a systematic and reliable approach to judicial compensation; and

WHEREAS, maintaining a competitive salary is necessary to attract new judges to the bench but just as important to retain experienced jurists;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Texas Judicial Council respectfully recommends that the Legislature establish a permanent cost of living adjustment for judges tied to the consumer price index to prevent the erosion of judicial salaries to inflation.

  
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Honorable Jimmy Blacklock  
Chairman, Texas Judicial Council