

Remarks to the Compensation Commission

December 13, 2012

I wish to address the issue of judicial compensation. I understand that the Compensation Commission has a broader charge, but I am not moved to address salaries in the Executive and Legislative branches of government. Folks who work in those branches of government can advocate for themselves.

I am concerned with judicial compensation. I am concerned about falling behind. I am aware that the Commission has not made a substantive recommendation in this regard since 2005. Allowing this opportunity to pass would be a mistake.

The Delaware Judiciary is among the state's most valuable assets. It is held in the highest regard by business and legal interests around the country and around the world. The Delaware Judiciary is responsible for billions of dollars in state revenue every year. In many ways it is our state Court system that allows Delaware to thrive, even now as the economy has been so challenging nationally.

This is why I encourage you to take the long view. This is the genius of the compensation commission process. It is in the best interests of all Delawareans to attract and keep the people who make the Delaware Judiciary such a great asset. I recognize that this year's state budget presents challenges. I frankly cannot recall a year when the state budget did not present challenges. That is the problem with taking the short view. When we focus exclusively on how to get through this year we lose sight of the that which we need to get us through every year.

If the Compensation Commission does not do the right thing by the Delaware Judiciary at this opportunity it will be even more difficult at the next opportunity, four years from now.

Some of the members of the General Assembly apparently want to allow their own compensation questions to be decided through the political process. I certainly won't argue with that. And I take no position on the compensation for people in the Executive Branch. I don't know very much about that. But I have practiced law in Delaware for about 27 years, in every Court in our state, and I know a great deal about the quality and commitment of the Delaware Judiciary. I know that it would be wrong to fail to address judicial compensation now.

Respectfully submitted,

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