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State of the Judiciary: Chief Justice Speaks on Access, Security and the Rule of Law

Idaho's courts have a very specific calling: to deliver the promises in the Idaho Constitution regarding courts of justice based on the rule of law, not on political or public preferences.

This mission is fundamental to the concept of a fair court system. However, disagreements with our system of government are increasingly presenting challenges to judges' security, Chief Justice G. Richard Bevan told members of the Idaho Legislature today. "But this is what our Constitution demands and what our judges provide: justice based on the rule of law, no matter the judge's personal views of the legal principle being applied," he said.

The remarks were part of the chief justice's annual State of the Judiciary address. The yearly address to the Idaho Legislature complements the Judicial Branch's annual report and provides a regular touchpoint between the two branches of government.

A recording of Chief Justice Bevan's remarks will be posted as soon as it is available at annualreport.isc.idaho.gov. The text of his speech can be found accompanying this news release at isc.idaho.gov.

Chief Justice Bevan urged lawmakers to consider legislation on judicial salaries "that helps maintain a highly qualified and experienced judiciary" after judges were the only state employees not to receive a change in salary in 2022.

He also discussed the partnership between the Judicial Branch and the local counties who provide facilities and staff for Idaho's courts. He talked about continued technology needs of the court system: The fund set up to pay for court technology is increasingly unable to cover that need, and the Idaho Supreme Court is in the middle of researching a long-term solution.

Court technology is increasingly vital to ensuring public access to justice, Chief Justice Bevan said: "Technology now offers more ways to make court access easier and less disruptive — and the people of Idaho expect us to use it."

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