

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 2, 2025

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Supreme Court Proposes Changes to Judicial Compensation

The Idaho Supreme Court will ask legislators in January for significant changes to how judges are compensated in this state.

The proposals are intended to address worsening issues affecting the recruitment and retention of judges in this state, aspects of which are summarized in [this report](#). The proposals were developed after consideration of a study of Idaho attorney compensation and of judicial salaries in neighboring states.

The Supreme Court proposes creating an independent committee to advise on judicial salaries, patterned after the committee that decides salaries for the Idaho Legislature. This comes after multiple instances where legislation mixed policy issues with judicial salaries – including one year where judges were the only state employees to not receive a raise.

That committee, if created, would take time to establish. In the meantime, the Supreme Court proposes raising judicial salaries to make judicial service a more realistic option for experienced attorneys. Idaho Code sets various judicial salaries based on the salary for a Supreme Court justice. The Supreme Court proposes setting the salary for a justice at \$215,000; per Idaho Code section 59-502, this would set the salary for a Court of Appeals judge at \$207,000, a district judge at \$201,000 and a magistrate judge at \$193,000.

These proposals are the Supreme Court's main request to the Idaho Legislature when it convenes this month. The Court will also ask for [four new judgeships](#) to address caseloads and relieve traveling judges in north, south-central and eastern Idaho.

“The Supreme Court does not make these requests lightly,” said Chief Justice G. Richard Bevan. “Idaho’s courts use just a small slice of public spending and we find thoughtful ways to stretch public dollars. But to maintain our strong, independent judiciary, we must keep salaries competitive with what experienced attorneys and judges can earn elsewhere.”

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