

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS30495 / S1156

Judicial salaries are established by the Legislature and set forth in section 59-502, Idaho Code, which also indexes such salaries to a Supreme Court Justice's salary to avoid salary compression among the four types of judgeships. The current salaries for Idaho's judicial officials, as set by this statute, are: \$160,400 for Supreme Court Justices, \$150,400 for Court of Appeals Judges, \$144,400 for District Judges, and \$132,400 for Magistrate Judges. In 2022, Idaho averaged only 5 applicants for each District Judge vacancy, and only 11 applicants for each Magistrate Judge opening. While not the only factor, compensation is undoubtedly a consideration for attorneys considering seeking a position on the bench. Candidates for judgeships must be experienced attorneys, and experienced attorneys are routinely highly compensated for private sector work. However, the private market is not the Idaho judiciary's only competition for high-quality, experienced candidates. It is also increasingly quite common for public sector lawyers to be paid more than the Idaho judges before whom they appear. In addition, the current salary for Idaho's District Judges ranks 49th nationally as compared to other states' general jurisdiction judges, and our District Judges' salary ranks next to last when compared to the 6 states adjacent to Idaho. This bill sets the annual salary of a Justice of the Supreme Court at \$171,628, which is a 7.0% increase of the current salary. As set forth in established Idaho Code, the difference between the salary of a Supreme Court Justice and a Court of Appeals Judge remains at \$10,000 (resulting in a 7.5% salary increase for Court of Appeals Judges); the difference between the salary of a Court of Appeals Judge and a District Judge remains at \$6,000 (resulting in a 7.8% salary increase for District Judges); and the difference between the salary of a District Judge and a Magistrate Judge remains at \$12,000 (resulting in a 8.5% salary increase for Magistrate Judges). Overall, this results in a \$11,228 salary increase per judicial officer.

FISCAL NOTE

The total annual fiscal impact for this increase in salary and associated benefits, which are paid from the general fund, is \$2,456,008.

Contact:

Sara Omundson, Administrative Director of the Courts
(208) 334-2246
Jason Spillman, Legal Counsel
(208) 334-2246

DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).