



McKAY CHADWELL, PLLC
1601 ONE UNION SQUARE • 600 UNIVERSITY STREET
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98101
(206) 233-2800 • FAX (206) 233-2809
www.mckay-chadwell.com

Michael D. McKay
direct line (206) 233-2805
mdm@mckay-chadwell.com

February 2, 2011

Hon. Ed Murray, Chair
Senate Ways and Means Committee
303 John A. Cherberg Building
PO Box 40443
Olympia, WA 98504-0443

Hon. Ross Hunter, Chair
House Ways and Means Committee
105 Modular Building C
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Hon. Joseph Zarelli, Ranking Member
Senate Ways and Means Committee
204 Irv Newhouse Building
PO Box 40418
Olympia, WA 98504-0418

Hon. Gary Alexander, Ranking Member
House Ways and Means Committee
426B Legislative Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Re: Legislation Authorizing the Reduction of Public Officials' Salaries

Gentlemen:

As a former Vice Chair of the Washington Citizens' Commission on Salaries for Elected Officials (Salary Commission), I urge your careful consideration of the myriad bills before you that would either require or authorize the reduction of public officials' salaries. The people of the State of Washington created the Salary Commission in 1986 to remove political considerations from the setting of elected officials' salaries. Any bill that could be considered a step back toward such political considerations should be viewed with caution.

Hon. Ed Murray
Hon. Ross Hunter
Hon. Joseph Zarelli
Hon. Gary Alexander
February 2, 2011
Page 2

The largest group of public officials affected by these bills is the judges. While careers in public service demand sacrifice, judicial salaries must be adequate to fulfill the Salary Commission's mandate to "attract citizens of the highest quality to public service." Unlike other elected officials, judges must forego outside business and professional interests as a condition of holding office. At the same time, the potential monetary benefits of practice in the private sector frequently far exceed that of public service, making it difficult to convince good lawyers to accept judicial appointments.

Consider, as well, that these bills do not address the effect of a salary reduction on retirement issues. Judges nearing retirement may decide to retire earlier than otherwise required, or desired, in order to preserve their current level of retirement benefits. Keeping seasoned judges in office benefits both the public and the state.

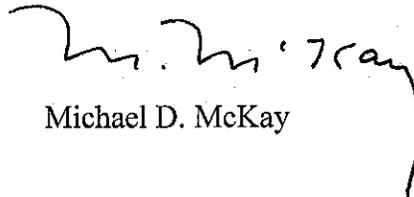
While I certainly understand the budgetary pressures you face, I strongly urge you to factor in these important considerations as you debate these bills.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

With warm regards.

Very truly yours,

McKAY CHADWELL, PLLC



Michael D. McKay

cc: Senate Ways and Means Committee Members
House Ways and Means Committee Members
Chief Justice Barbara Madsen