



AMERICAN JUDICATURE SOCIETY ~ Washington Chapter

701 Fifth Avenue Suite 455 · Seattle, Washington 98104 · (206) 624-4900

The Honorable Charles Johnson, Associate Chief Justice
Washington State Supreme Court
Temple of Justice
Olympia, WA 98504-0929

May 14, 2010

Dear Justice Johnson,

I am writing on behalf of the Washington Chapter of the American Judicature Society to express our support for the proposed change to the Code of Judicial Conduct (CJC 2.11(a)(4)) concerning recusal related to judicial campaign spending.

Founded in 1913, AJS is a national organization of judges, attorneys and citizens dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the independence and effectiveness of the judicial system. AJS dedicates its resources exclusively to addressing problems and concerns of the justice system at all levels. The work of AJS includes the following:

- Minimizing the role of politics in judicial selection
- Promoting improvements in the operation of the courts
- Supporting an independent judiciary while promoting the highest standards of conduct and ethics in the courts
- Promoting the selection of the most qualified judges
- Increasing public understanding and appreciation of the justice system

It is with these goals in mind that the AJS Board has voted to support the proposed recusal rule that would require a judge to recuse from a case when a party or lawyer in the case has contributed to the judge's election campaign in excess of a prescribed amount, and that fact has been presented to the judge by motion. The rule is narrowly tailored and the threshold is set at a high level. The rule does not prevent a supporter from spending as much as he wishes on a campaign, nor would the rule penalize the financial supporter. It merely provides for a consequence, recusal, of very high contributions.

We do not suggest that any of our judges has been or ever will be corrupted by campaign support. We believe, however, that the proposed recusal rule will provide assurance to the public of the fairness of our courts. It will preserve not only the integrity of our judiciary, but also the appearance of integrity. We strongly urge the Court to adopt the proposed change.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views.

Very truly yours,

Hon. Sharon S. Armstrong
President, AJS Washington Chapter

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