



The Supreme Court of Texas

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September 3, 2025

To: Texas County Judges and Commissioners Courts

RE: Implementation of Judicial Pay Legislation

Dear County Judges and County Commissioners of Texas,

As you decide how best to allocate the taxpayer funds entrusted to your care, I urge you to continue the judicial-pay supplements provided to the judges and justices in your county. The Texas Legislature recently authorized an increase in those county supplements, and I also ask you to consider providing that increase to your local judges, who work hard to deliver equal justice under the law for your constituents.

In a historic vote on the last day of the 89th Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature raised the salary of the appellate, district, statutory county, and statutory probate judges throughout Texas by 25% across the board. The change is effective September 1, 2025. The Legislature also amended the pay for constitutional county judges performing judicial functions, who will be compensated based on their years of service and will benefit from the 25% increase. The salary increase also results in an increase in the amount paid to counties by the state for each statutory county and statutory probate judge in the county.

State law authorizes counties to supplement the salary of your local district judges and court of appeals justices. The maximum amount previously allowed was \$18,000 for district judges and \$9,000 for court of appeals justices. Effective September 1, 2025, the maximum county supplement amounts have increased to \$25,000 and \$12,500, respectively.

These reforms were badly needed. Before the 25% pay raise, Texas ranked near the bottom out of the fifty states in judicial pay—even including the county supplements you have historically

provided to your local judges. As the Legislature considered this problem, and as I and other judges worked to inform them of the need to address it, our baseline assumptions about judicial pay included the county supplements currently provided. In other words, the 25% increase was designed to augment the existing pay structure, which includes county supplements. The increase does not alleviate the need for county supplements, and withdrawing or reducing those supplements would only aggravate the problem the Legislature's pay raise was intended to address. For this reason, I urge you to maintain any judicial supplements currently provided to the judges and justices in your counties. If possible, I also ask you to consider increasing those supplements within the allowable range.

The daily work of the judges in your county has an enormous impact on the lives and fortunes of your constituents. For the good of our fellow Texans, who rightfully expect fair and efficient justice to be done in Texas courtrooms, we must do everything we can to recruit and retain the very best people we can find to serve as judges. Together, we all play a role in that effort. The Legislature has done its part by raising judicial salaries. I ask you to do your part by maintaining or increasing the county supplements paid to judges.

Thank you for your service to your county and to our great State. May God bless you in your important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Blacklock', with a stylized, flowing script.

Jimmy Blacklock, Chief Justice