

Dear Members of the Judicial Conference:

The Budget Committee's recommendation that the Conference request Congress to increase the panel attorney rate from \$128 to \$134 (a \$6 increase) for FY2016 has been placed on the discussion calendar. The Defender Services Committee had requested that the Budget Committee at its July 2014 meeting recommend to the Conference a \$16 increase to \$144, the maximum statutory amount.

The Budget Committee will be in touch later this week with a full explanation of our position. To summarize briefly at this point, however, our view is that full funding cannot be supported by the data available at this time and cannot be achieved for the 2016 fiscal year. Moreover, and most importantly, a request for full funding at this time, given the flat budget caps with which Congress is expected to be working in the 2016 fiscal year, would jeopardize the judiciary's efforts to attain full funding of panel attorney rates over the next several years and would have a detrimental impact on the judiciary's hard-won credibility with Congress, thus potentially negatively affecting all judiciary accounts. The Conference must also give careful attention to whether the judiciary can afford the present annual costs of the full rate increase (approximately \$42 million) and the long-term, even higher costs, if criminal filings, which are presently down, increase again.

Thanks for your careful consideration of this issue, and I look forward to discussing it further with each of you.

Julia Gibbons, Chair of the Budget Committee  
Sent from my iPhone