

SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

IN RE: REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUDICIAL
COMPENSATION WORK GROUP - AMENDMENT TO
THE RULES OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION (JUDICIAL
COMPENSATION), CASE NO. SC 06-1036

This comment is respectfully submitted in response to the Committee's proposed new Rule of Judicial Administration 2.190, Judicial Compensation. As an organization comprised of interested persons, the Florida Trial Court Staff Attorneys Association submits its support for the adoption of this Rule with minor revisions. The stated purpose of the proposed rule is to establish the unified position of the judicial branch on compensation for effective communication to the Florida Legislature.

As professional legal support staff for the trial judges of this state, the Florida Trial Court Staff Attorneys Association submits that compensation for judicial staff attorneys, or law clerks as we are sometimes called, be included in this policy. Staff Attorneys at both the circuit court and district court of appeal levels provide vital support to judges and increase the courts' efficiency and productivity in processing cases and issuing orders. Experienced legal staff provides the most competent and efficient support to the trial court in particular, and high turnover due to relatively low salary

levels reduces productivity. Trial Court Staff Attorneys are compensated at substantially lower rates in comparison to other government lawyers, as documented by the Pay and Study Classification (MAG Survey conducted by Management Information Group Inc. (2005)), and the result is high turnover and difficulty in recruiting experienced lawyers.

The Trial Court Staff Attorneys Association urges the Court to include Staff Attorneys in its unified approach to compensation to demonstrate the cohesiveness of the court system in the face of challenges intended to render it impotent. In furtherance of this goal, the Florida Trial Court Staff Attorneys Association requests that the following additions be included in the proposed rule.

Recommendation #1

It is recommended that Rule 2.190(b) include court law clerks working for the district court of appeal. Specifically, the recommended language should read: **The annual salary of law clerks working for a district court of appeal judge should be equal to 95 percent of the annual salary of a law clerk working for a supreme court justice.**

Recommendation #2

It is recommended that Rule 2.190(c) include trial court law clerks working for the circuit court. The recommended language should read: **The**

annual salary of trial court law clerks working for the circuit court should be equal to 90 percent of the annual salary of a law clerk working for a supreme court justice.

Based on the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court adopt the recommendations proposed.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT an original and nine copies have been filed with the Court this 14th day of August, 2006 and served upon the chair of the work group, Judge Carolyn K. Fulmer, Second District Court of Appeal, Post Office Box 327, Lakeland, Fl. 33802-0327. Electronic copies of these comments have been filed in accordance with Fla. Admin. Order No. AOSC04-84. Responses to this commentary should be sent to the attention of Nancy S. Isenberg, President, FTCSAA, at the following address: Leon County Courthouse, Rm. 342, 301 S. Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301. E-mail: nancyi@leoncountyfl.gov

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED ON BEHALF
OF THE FLORIDA TRIAL COURT STAFF ATTORNEYS
ASSOCIATION:

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