Administrative Office of the Courts

NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JUDICIAL COMPENSATION COMMISSION TO MEET NEXT WEEK

SANTA FE – The Judicial Compensation Commission will meet next week to consider recommendations to the 2020 Legislature for a possible judicial salary increase.

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

DATE: Tuesday, July 9.

PLACE: Supreme Court Building, Room 208
237 Don Gaspar, Santa Fe, NM

The independent six-member commission is required by state law to annually recommend a judicial pay plan to the Legislative Finance Committee and the Department of Finance and Administration.

The commission has concluded in its past reports that improved judicial salaries are needed to help retain judges and recruit a more diverse mix of experienced attorneys for judgeships because lawyers can earn more money in private practice than if they served as a judge.

The commission in 2018 recommended a 5% base salary increase for judges, and an increase in the pay differential for the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and chief judges of other state courts because of their additional administrative duties and responsibilities. Also recommended was a change in law to make the commission's salary recommendations take effect unless rejected by a majority of the Legislature.

A 6% salary increase was approved by the 2019 Legislature and signed into law by the governor. The annual salary for a district court judge in New Mexico will be $133,757 when the increase takes effect this month. The salary of a New Mexico Supreme Court justice will be $148,207.

The commission is chaired by Sergio Pareja, dean of the University of New Mexico School of Law. Other members are William Fulginiti, executive director of the New Mexico Municipal League; Kathleen "Kay" Marr, former secretary of the Department of Finance and Administration; Deborah Seligman, Santa Fe; and Jerry Dixon, an Albuquerque attorney and president of the State Bar of New Mexico. One commission position is vacant.

The commission's prior reports and the agenda for the July 9 meeting are attached and available online: https://www.nmcourts.gov/judicial-compensation-commission.aspx

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JUDICIAL COMPENSATION COMMISSION

AGENDA

July 9, 2019

9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Conference Room, Second Floor

New Mexico Supreme Court

Santa Fe, New Mexico

1. Welcome and introductions (Chair Pareja)

2. Review minutes from June 12, 2018 Judicial Compensation Commission meeting for approval, amendment, or disapproval in accordance with the Open Meetings Act (Chair Pareja)

3. Report on legislative action during the 2019 session (Arthur Pepin)

    a. Update on Judicial Salaries

4. Discussion of Differences between Chief Judge/Justice and Judge/Justice Salaries and Workloads in Other States (Arthur Pepin)

5. Proposed Constitutional Amendment or Statutory Proposal regarding Authority of Judicial Compensation Commission (Arthur Pepin)

6. Discuss recommendations; schedule draft and final report deadlines; decide if additional meeting is required (Commission Members)

7. Adjourn (Chair Pareja)