



22 EAST MIFFLIN STREET, SUITE 900
MADISON, WI 53703
TOLL FREE: 1.866.404.2700
PHONE: 608.663.7188
FAX: 608.663.7189
WWW.WICOUNTIES.ORG

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Finance
FROM: Marcie Rainbolt, Government Affairs Associate
DATE: April 27, 2017
SUBJECT: 2017-2019 State Biennial Budget – Judicial Compensation

Regarding items scheduled for consideration by the Joint Committee on Finance on May 1, 2017, please consider the following recommendation of the Wisconsin Counties Association:

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY	
LFB PAPER #	RECOMMENDATION
590	Support Alternative 4b

Attached please find rationale for the items listed above. Additional information can be obtained by contacting the WCA office at 608-663-7188.

RECOMMENDATION: Support Alternative 4b**Rationale:**

- Testifying before JFC, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court requested, "...that judicial compensation remain in the State's compensation plan, with the compensation of all other elected officials, just as it is now." Alternative 4b is consistent with the Supreme Court's request of JFC.
 - WCA recommends that judicial compensation remain under the state employee compensation plan, as the Governor's proposed change jeopardizes county circuit court funding. State funding for circuit courts accounts for less than 40% of court operations, down from 46% in 2007. The proposed change to compensation in the budget will further exacerbate the shift towards additional county responsibility for funding the courts.
 - Under the Governor's plan, the Supreme Court could allocate funds into a new Program Revenue account for judicial compensation. These funds would likely be taken from the county circuit court appropriation as there are very few appropriations with sufficient funds to cover salary increases.
 - WCA supports alternative 4b which provides that judicial compensation comes from the state employee compensation plan (current law). Alternative 4b also increases compensation reserves with GPR while reducing compensation reserves for non-judicial court staff in the 2017-19 biennium. Justices and judges under this alternative will receive an eight percent salary increase over the biennium.
 - Alternative 4b does not request additional expenditures over what the Governor proposed in his budget.
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