

The Clerks' Association wishes to acknowledge Mr. Genuario, of Office of Policy and Management, and OPM's involvement in the implementation of a compensation package for the Clerks of the Probate Court System.

As we are all well aware, this committee has been charged with developing :

- (1) A compensation plan: in addition to establishing the basic levels of compensation and advancement, it shall include employee benefits, for employees of the courts of probate.
- (2) staffing levels for each court of probate;
- (3) The miscellaneous operating/office budget for each court of probate.

Through the course of the last several weeks, I think we have all come to recognize how challenging this committee's task is, and how important the outcome will be to the continued success of the system.

Fair compensation and an equitable schedule for advancement for clerks must be **the highest priority issue** of this committee and yet we have spent the least time on it.

We have been continuously acknowledged as a unique class of employee by Probate Administration and by our employers, the elected Judges of Probate.

**WE ARE
SPECIALLY TRAINED EMPLOYEES
THAT WORK IN A
UNIQUE JUDICIAL SYSTEM
IN THE
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
AND WE
CLERK
FOR JUDGES.**

Compensation is the principal issue.

We are in a judicial system and this Committee has used the judicial benefits package as a guide in establishing our benefits package.

It has long been believed that what the State lacks in salary, it compensates its employees in other benefits. Probate Clerks have **never** benefited from a unified compensation package. Rather each clerk enters into a negotiation with the judge that is the employer. Compensation and advancement has never been uniformly established.

We find it very positive that we have the opportunity to establish an equitable system so that we will be fairly compensated for our contributions to the Judicial System.

As the Judicial Benefits Package demonstrates, **compensation is more than sick, vacation, holiday, personal time and bereavement.**

Salary is the most significant component in compensation and we are asking for a **fair compensation package.**

Clerks want a structured salary adjustment via regular salary increases and we want Cost of Living increase.

The first Budget Meeting was held on November 16th. The Complete Judicial Benefits package was JUST released to committee members and the Clerks Association on February 23rd.

We are **NOW** addressing salary and **RESPECTFULLY** I must ask this committee, do you have **ALL** the tools necessary to make educated decisions that will affect clerks for years to come.

How is it that **MAG** was chosen for the salary survey?

Why are we being compared to California, Texas, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island?

As stated, **why not go with what WE ARE.**

WE ARE IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT.

Were Connecticut Judicial salaries investigated?

Was there at least a comparison made as to what Judicial pays in relation to MAG's suggested salary ranges?

How were salary ranges determined?

Where does it state what determines Minimum, Market and Maximum salaries?

Will Judicial salary ranges be used **in any part of compensation for clerks?**

Do you know how Judicial establishes its salaries?

How does Judicial give salary increases?

Does Judicial give step increases?

Do you move up one step a year?

Who determines the salary increase?

What about **Cost of Living Increases**?

Where can a clerk turn if their salary is not within the listed range?

What **exactly** will Probate Administration's role be in salary increases? Are they simply the records keeper?

We are employees of our judge; will judges have a voice in salary increases? Aren't they the most qualified to evaluate the process to remunerate their clerks?

Will there be merit raises for exceptional service?

These and many more questions need to be answered before ANY compensation package can be fairly addressed and evaluated.

Much time is being spent on our salaries, might I suggest that this committee look at ctsunlight.org? It is eye opening as to what some State employees are paid. On a daily basis Clerks responsibilities must be done in a timely manner and have far reaching impacts. Our salaries should reflect the multi layers of responsibilities.

These are only a few of the many issues that need to be addressed. Before we are finished, there will be many others. We respectfully ask that CAPC be part of the discussion and wish to be part of the solution.

Regarding staffing levels and Weighted Workload, we do the work and we know what is needed. How can determining staffing levels be addressed without addressing some very important issues? Shouldn't the weighted workload also include the work of a clerk? Aren't we doing the work?

The State of CT's Department of Revenue Service has all but washed their hands of reviewing and storing decedent's tax returns. That responsibility is now on the shoulders of clerks.

Laserfishing is now an added burden to clerks.

Having to copy court forms and copy changes to the Clerk's manual, traditionally responsibilities of Probate Administration, has been shifted to each Probate Court. It seems as though Probate workers have been given more and more duties while other state agencies do less and less.

The amount of time taken away for our jobs to process **passport applications** **MUST** be taken into consideration. Probate Administration **wants** the income passports generate, but they are not considering adding staff to process them.

The system is flawed and needs to be addressed before you can reasonably determine the number of clerks required to carry out daily court tasks. With no disrespect intended, **we do the work**. Our contribution to the workload that generates the system's income **MUST** also be considered.

As much as we can appreciate the financial difficulties that the state is under, money has been diverted to the General Fund from the probate system, including some \$30 million dollars. We would not be where we are today, having these very difficult conversations, if those monies were still available.

As President of CAPC, I am disappointed that in drafting and passing Public Act 09-114 no consideration was given to having a representative for **ALL CLERKS** be at the table as an equal member of the Budget Committee.

Communication is a very important element in the sharing of ideas, discussing and resolving issues.

On behalf of the Association, we appreciate your consideration in this very important issue that will affect the clerks for years to come and we look forward to making our formal presentation to this Committee on the 10th.