



ARKANSAS JUDICIAL COUNCIL, INC.

JUSTICE BUILDING

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April 30, 2014

**Senator Uvalde Lindsay, Co-Chair
Personnel Subcommittee of the
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol, Room 171
Little Rock, AR 72201**

**Representative Andrea Lea, Co-Chair
Personnel Subcommittee of the
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol, Room 171
Little Rock, AR 72201**

RE: Interim Study Proposal 2013 – 162

Dear Senator Lindsay and Representative Lea:

This letter is to provide your subcommittee with an up to date status report with respect to the Arkansas Judicial Council and Interim Study Proposal 2013 – 162.

Initially, I want to thank you individually and the General Assembly collectively for the passage of legislation which provided full funding for payment of TCA salaries, COLA increases, merit increases, and salary adjustments based on National Court Managers Certification. Also, funding was provided for payment of travel expense and substitutes for trial court assistants and court reporters. The additional funding was critical to the effective operations of trial courts in the State of Arkansas and the Arkansas Judicial Council is grateful for the support shown by each of you and the General Assembly.

With respect to items remaining to be considered in the future, I would refer you to my letter of December 12, 2013 wherein I reported that the Arkansas Judicial Council recommended a uniform entry level salary be set for all new trial court assistants and court reporters and that special statutory provisions and legislative procedures be amended to eliminate the possibility of special entry level rates of pay or additions to compensation for individual employees; and that, after initial employment, trial court employees receive only such additions to compensation as are available for all other state employees.

The recommendation of the Judicial Council included a specific recommendation that the entry pay level pay grade for trial court assistants be raised from C117 to C121 and that the minimum annual rate of pay for trial court assistants currently employed be set at the entry level salary for a Grade C121 employee. Further, the Judicial Council recommended that the pay grade for court reporters be raised from C119 to C125 and that the minimum annual rate of pay of court reporters currently employed be set at the entry level salary for a Grade C125 employee.

The Judicial Council additionally supports favorable consideration by the General Assembly for the concept of transferring funding for TCA's and court reporters from the AOJ fund to general revenue. The Council understands that is a major step and will require much further study.

The Arkansas Judicial Council continues to support the above recommendations. Our representatives to the committee will continue to provide further explanation and respond to questions from the committee.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Edwards". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Robert Edwards, President

RE/can

cc: Judge Earnest Brown
Judge Charles Yeargan
Judge Beth Bryan
Judge Gary Arnold
Judge Van Smith
Mr. J.D. Gingerich