
JUDICIARY/SUPREME COURT

- Increases the salaries of the Ohio Supreme Court justices and the judges of the courts of appeals, courts of common pleas, municipal courts, and county courts by 5%, rounded to the next highest \$50, each fiscal year, starting July 1, 2015, with the last increase July 1, 2018.
- Changes the date for the justices' and judges' salary increases to a fiscal year (July 1), rather than a calendar year (January 1).
- Eliminates the annual cost-of-living adjustment that was last applied in 2008 to justices' and judges' salaries.

Salary increases for justices and judges

(R.C. 141.04)

The bill increases the annual salaries of justices of the Ohio Supreme Court, and judges of the courts of appeals, courts of common pleas and divisions thereof, municipal courts, and county courts, by 5% each year, rounded to the next highest \$50. The salary increases start July 1, 2015, with the last increase beginning July 1, 2018. The bill also changes to July 1 the date on which justices' and judges' salary increases begin, instead of January 1 under current law. Justices and judges may receive salary increases during their terms of office because the Ohio Constitution does not prohibit in-term increases for them. However, the Ohio Constitution prohibits their compensation from being diminished during their terms of office.¹⁰⁶

The last act that increased the salaries of justices and judges was H.B. 712 of the 123rd General Assembly, which took effect December 8, 2000. In the 2000 act, their salaries were increased and then indexed to the consumer price index¹⁰⁷ (CPI) each calendar year from 2002 through 2008. The annual cost-of-living adjustment, or COLA, that was applied to the salaries was the lesser of 3% or the percentage increase, if any, in the CPI for the previous year, rounded to the nearest one-tenth of 1%. Because the COLA ceased after 2008, salaries have not changed since that year. The bill entirely eliminates the COLA.

¹⁰⁶ Ohio Constitution, Article IV, Section 6; *MacDonald v. Bell*, 23 Ohio App.2d 249 (7th Dist. Ct. App. 1970).

¹⁰⁷ The CPI used is the consumer price index prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. city average for urban wage earners and clerical workers: all items, 1982-1984=100).



The bill's revisions to the salary amounts for July 1, 2014,¹⁰⁸ are not salary increases. The amounts merely reflect the current salaries of justices and judges as a result of the COLA being applied to their salaries each year from 2002 through 2008.

The salaries of the chief justice and justices of the Supreme Court and of the judges of the courts of appeals are paid entirely by the state. But the salaries of the common pleas, municipal, and county court judges are paid in part by the state and in part by the relevant local government. The bill applies the 5% increases to these aggregate judicial salaries, but it holds the local share at the current level, so that the state pays for all of the increases.

The following chart summarizes the bill's judicial salary provisions, and for common pleas, municipal court, and county court judges, states their aggregate salaries:

Judicial Office	2014 Salary	2015 Salary	2016 Salary	2017 Salary	2018 Salary
Chief Justice, Supreme Court	\$150,850	\$158,400	\$166,350	\$174,700	\$183,450
Justice, Supreme Court	\$141,600	\$148,700	\$156,150	\$164,000	\$172,200
Court of Appeals Judge	\$132,000	\$138,600	\$145,550	\$152,850	\$160,500
Court of Common Pleas Judge	\$121,350	\$127,450	\$133,850	\$140,550	\$147,600
Municipal Court Judge (full-time and part-time in large jurisdictions) ¹⁰⁹	\$114,100	\$119,850	\$125,850	\$132,150	\$138,800
Municipal Court Judge (part-time in small jurisdictions) ¹¹⁰	\$65,650	\$68,950	\$72,400	\$76,050	\$79,900
County Court Judge	\$65,650	\$68,950	\$72,400	\$76,050	\$79,900

¹⁰⁸ See, for example, R.C. 141.04(A)(1)(a) or (A)(2)(a).

¹⁰⁹ A part-time judge of a municipal court that has a population of more than 50,000 in its territory receives the same salary as a full-time municipal court judge. If the presiding judge of a municipal court that has full-time judges or that has a population of more than 50,000 in its territory is also the administrative judge, that judge receives additional compensation of \$1,500, which is paid by the relevant local government or governments. R.C. 1901.11(B)(2) and (C).

¹¹⁰ A part-time judge of a municipal court that has a population of 50,000 or less in its territory receives the same salary as a county court judge, all of whom are part-time.