

Position	Current	Proposed	Change Request	Em.	Requested Salaries
Supreme Court Chief Justice	\$161,841	\$180,000	\$2,500	1	\$182,500
Supreme Court Justice	\$149,589	\$166,500	\$13,500	6	\$180,000
Court of Appeals, Chief Judge	\$147,286	\$164,000	-	-	\$164,000
Court of Appeals Judge	\$144,982	\$161,500	\$1,000	11	\$162,500
Circuit Court Judge	\$140,372	\$160,000	-	-	\$160,000
District Court Judge	\$125,495	\$140,000	-	-	\$140,000

Justifications for the Requested Change

1. The comparative States, with one exception, select their Justices by an appointment process followed by a retention election. Louisiana is the exception and its Justices are each elected from one of seven districts in the state. In contrast, Arkansas Supreme Court Justices are elected in statewide non-partisan elections. Given the financial, physical and emotional toll of a state-wide election, trial judges would be reluctant to consider seeking a position on the supreme court with a relatively small difference in compensation.
2. The Court of Appeals Judges, Circuit Judges and District Judges all receive reimbursement for mileage when traveling for court. The Court of Appeals Judges, who do not live in Pulaski County, have a fund of \$60,000 annually to reimburse them for actual mileage from their homes to the Justice Building three times per week. In essence, the 10 Court of Appeals Judges who are eligible, have available \$6,000 that is not available to the Supreme Court Justices, who must pay travel expenses with after tax dollars.
3. The comparative states are similar to Arkansas in the structure of their executive and legislative branches. However, they all have a very different court structure. In Oklahoma, the Supreme Court hears no criminal cases. Instead, all criminal cases go to their Court of Criminal Appeals. Both the Iowa and Tennessee Supreme Courts hear cases chosen from requests following a decision in the Court of Criminal Appeals or Court of Civil Appeals. In at least three of the comparative states, the Supreme Court meets in conference only once per month, in some states less. In contrast, the Arkansas Supreme Court meets twice weekly.
4. None of the comparative states have a schedule or Supreme Court docket that resembles the schedule and docket of the Arkansas Supreme Court. In 2014 the Arkansas Supreme Court issued 445 opinions. The Louisiana Supreme Court was next in the number of opinions issued, with 200, and the Missouri Supreme Court issued 89 opinions. Clearly, the supreme courts of the comparative states operate very different, both in terms of the content of their docket, their jurisdiction, and the entire structure of their judicial system.