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July 10, 2011

# Underpaid Judges?

**To the Editor:**

Re "Judges Quitting at Unusual Rate as Salaries Lag" (front page, July 5):

I have practiced public-interest law for nearly 40 years and have always been disturbed by the argument that judges are underpaid. Serving as a judge is public service, and public service means commitment to the community.

The quality of a judge does not, and should not, depend on the amount of judicial compensation or how closely it matches the extravagant earnings of attorneys at elite law firms.

Public-interest lawyers earn one-third to one-half of what judges do. We also have kids to support and send to college, but we manage to do it. Even so, our take-home pay is typically higher than an average American's, for which we are grateful.

I am firmly convinced that judges, who receive moderate pay, are more likely to understand the problems of day-to-day life of most Americans than those in salary brackets far beyond the dreams of their compatriots.

**JAMES C. HARRINGTON**

Director, Texas Civil Rights Project

Austin, Tex., July 5, 2011