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May 16, 2007

Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Arlen Specter
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Minority Member Specter:

I am writing to urge that Congress substantially increase the salaries of federal judges.

It is our understanding that federal judges have not received a significant pay increase since 1989, leaving the judges almost 24% behind where they would have been had their pay kept pace with that of other lawyers employed at the top levels of the federal government.

We are especially concerned that, if federal judges are underpaid even compared to other similarly situated lawyers in the federal government, only independently wealthy individuals will be able to afford to serve in that capacity. To ensure that the federal judiciary not become an enclave of the wealthy, it is important that federal judges receive a fair salary reflecting their high level of responsibility.

Thank you for considering the views of the AFL-CIO on this important matter.

Sincerely,

John J. Sweeney
President

JJS/mt