

# Minnesota Judicial State Court Salary Analysis



Prepared by  
Karine S. Moe, Ph.D.  
F.R. Bigelow Professor of Economics  
Department Chair  
Macalester College

February 18, 2013

# Minnesota Judicial Salary Recommendation



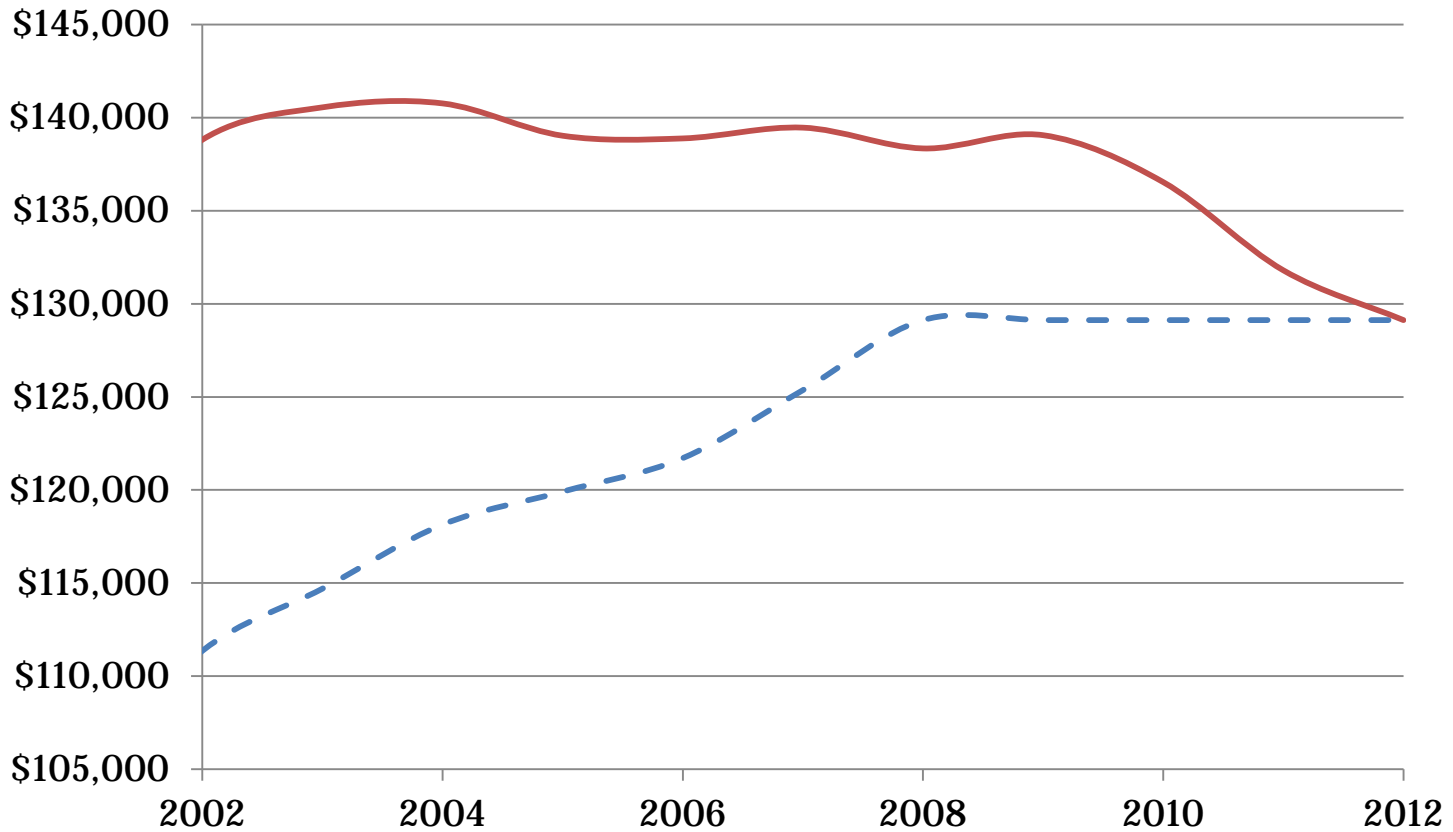
Minnesota judicial salaries have not kept pace with inflation or with other comparison salaries. In order to return salaries to the purchasing power of 2002, I recommend the following salary adjustments:

- 5.8% increase on July 1, 2013
- 5.8% increase on July 1, 2014
- 2.0% increase on July 1, 2015
- 2.0% increase on July 1, 2016

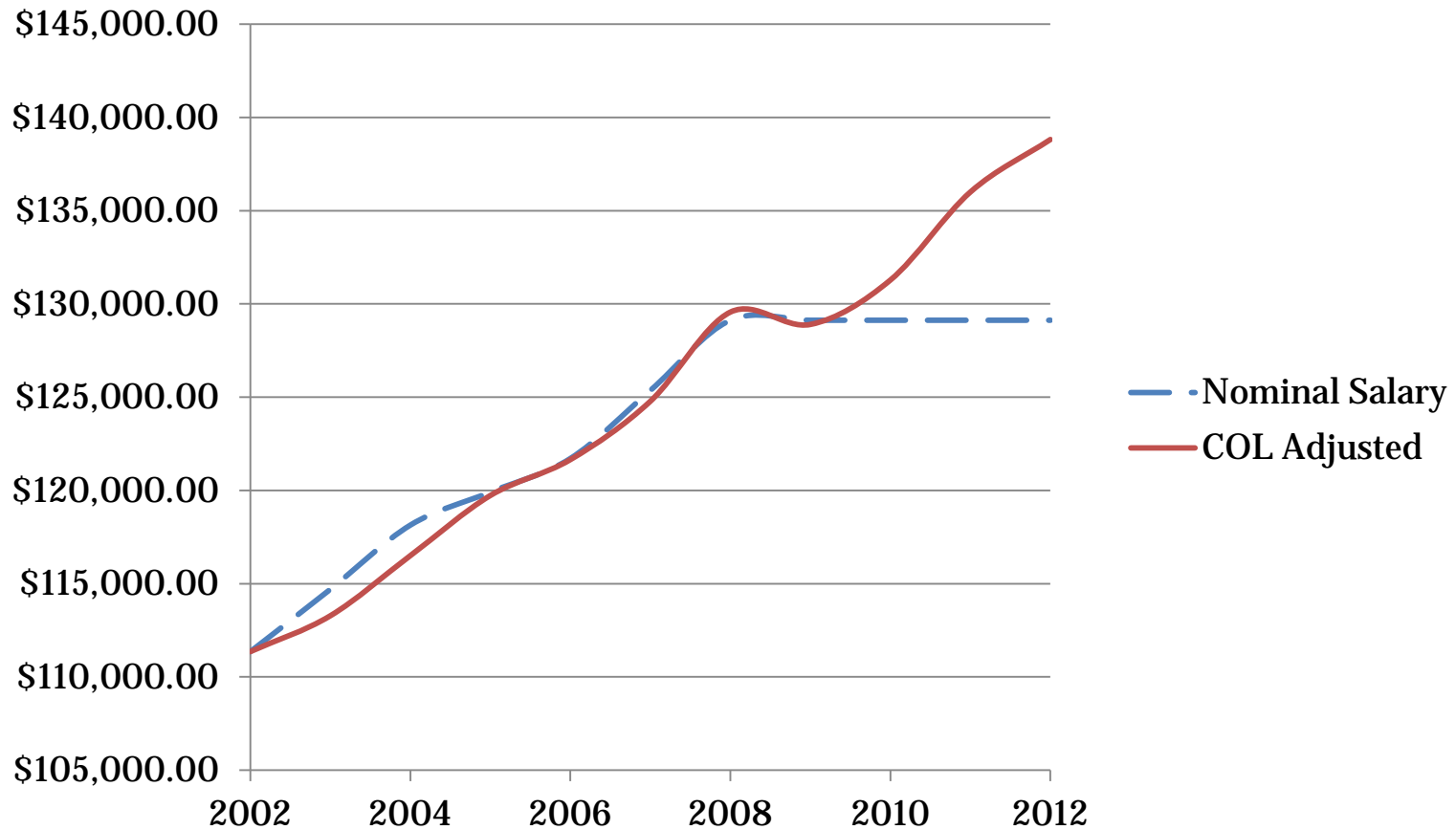
# Minnesota District Court Salaries

## Nominal and in 2012 Dollars

### 2002-2012



# Minnesota District Court Salaries Nominal and Cost-of-Living Adjusted 2002-2012



# Judicial Salary Comparisons



## **Minnesota judicial salaries:**

- are comparable to judicial salaries in Wisconsin
- are significantly below judicial salaries in Iowa
- run about \$8,000 below the national average
- run below the national median

# Judicial Salary Comparisons



- **The County Attorneys in the Twin Cities metropolitan area earn between 13% and 22% more than District Court Judges.**
- **Historically, District Court Judges have earned roughly 9% less than the Hennepin County Attorney.**

# Judicial Salary Comparisons



District Court Judge salaries relative to new associates at large Twin Cities law firms:

- 72% more in 1983
- 49% more in 1990
- 8% more in 2012

Estimates put Minnesota District Court judges at the

- high end of the starting pay scale for new associates
- low end of the starting pay scale for attorneys with 4-9 years of experience.

# Summary of Comparisons



- **Minnesota judges are paid below attorneys, in private practice, in other public service capacities, and in corporations.**
- **The gap in those salaries has been rising over time.**



# Long-Run Implications of these Trends



- Talented candidates may be less willing to run or accept judicial appointments.
- Sitting judges may resign for financial considerations.
- We may end up with a judiciary in which only the wealthy, or those with fewer alternative opportunities will be willing to serve.

# Minnesota Judicial Salary Recommendation



**My salary recommendations will**

- **restore judicial salaries to their 2002 levels**
- **move Minnesota ranking to just above the U.S. median**
- **restore the salary ratio of the Hennepin County Attorney to District Court Judge to its historical level**
- **widen the salary differential between District Court Judges and first-year associates at large Twin Cities law firms to 15%.**

# Minnesota Judicial Salary Recommendation



If the judges receive a 4.0% increase on July 1, 2013 and again on July 1, 2014, a

- 4.0% increase on July 1, 2015
- 4.0% increase on July 1, 2016

would restore the judges to 2002 purchasing power.