

**ADA Watch/National Coalition for Disability Rights, AFL-CIO  
Alliance for Justice, Community Rights Counsel,  
Earthjustice, Natural Resources Defense Council,  
People for the American Way, Sierra Club**

March 6, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20501

Re: Support for Ban on Judicial Junkets

Dear Senator Reid and Senator McConnell:

We are writing to strongly support Section 10(a)(2) of S. 1638, the Federal Judicial Salary Restoration Act of 2007, which bans corporate-funded judicial seminars in resort settings. On January 31, 2008, the Senate Judiciary Committee amended S. 1638 to add the ban on judicial junkets, and it ordered the bill as amended to be favorably reported. We understand the bill may be debated on the Senate floor in coming weeks, and we urge you to support the junkets ban included within the bill.

The undersigned groups represent millions of members across the country. Some of these groups have taken a position on S. 1638 in its entirety, some have not. We all agree, however, that a significant pay raise for federal judges should be linked with a solution to well-documented issues of judicial ethics, including the appearance of impropriety, raised raised by judicial junkets.

The problem of corporations and other special interests using expense-paid trips to lavish settings in a thinly-veiled attempt to lobby federal judges has been comprehensively documented in reports by Alliance for Justice, Community Rights Counsel, and others. These studies have detailed the serious conflicts of interest and perceptions of impropriety that can arise when judges attend these seminars or "junkets for judges," as they are commonly known. Ethics experts, judges, public interest groups, and more than thirty editorial boards from across the political spectrum have strongly criticized these programs. The junkets ban is particularly fair and appropriate in light of the substantial pay increase the bill provides.

S. 1638 provides a historic opportunity to take actions that will increase public confidence in a fair and independent judiciary for decades to come. We urge you to support these important and commonsense reforms.

Sincerely,

Jim Ward  
Founder and President  
ADA Watch/National Coalition for  
Disability Rights

William Samuel  
Director, Government Affairs Department  
AFL-CIO

Nan Aron  
President  
Alliance for Justice

Doug Kendall  
Executive Director  
Community Rights Counsel

Glenn Sugameli  
Senior Legislative Counsel  
Earthjustice

Karen Wayland  
Legislative Director  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Tanya Clay House  
Director of Public Policy  
People for the American Way

Pat Gallagher  
Director, Environmental Law Program  
Sierra Club