

## MJA Legislative Committee 2024 Annual Report

**Role:** The Legislative Committee serves as MJA’s principal point of contact with the Legislature. The Legislative Committee discusses pending bills, offers recommendations to the Executive Board for action on bills of substantial interest to MJA, and drafts letters on bills for the president's signature. Also, the Legislative Committee often works proactively to influence the legislative process by suggesting bills addressing MJA’s concerns, seeking sponsors for such bills, and advocating for the approval of such bills.

**Activities:** The Legislative Committee has two priorities in 2024. First, the Legislative Committee intends to persuade the Legislature to approve an increase in the retirement match for judges from three percent to five percent of contributions to the 401k-style retirement plan. The Legislature recently appropriated the funds necessary to fully implement the increase starting on October 1, 2024. A bill implementing the increase on an annual basis, HB 5328, is currently in the House, where the Committee expects action in the near future to put into operation the system that will allocate the appropriated funds of \$1.9 million in the new fiscal year.

Second, the Legislative Committee plans to persuade the Legislature to pass the Judicial Protection Act, HB 5724 & SB 871, which will remove judges’ personal identifying information from publicly available sources. The House passed the bill by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote, and action on the bill is likely in the Senate in the near future.

**Plans:** The Legislative Committee confirms that there will be a five-percent increase in judicial pay beginning on October 1, 2024. The funding for that increase has already been appropriated, so the increase will occur as a matter of course. The Committee is currently working on negotiating changes to bills that deal with jury selection and dedicated Family Court judgeships. Anybody who is interested in these projects should talk with Committee co-chairs Jeff Matis and Chris Yates.

**Issues:** The Legislative Committee may have to address many initiatives in the 2024 lame-duck legislative session, especially if the House changes party control in the 2024 election cycle.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Matis and Chris Yates, Legislative Committee Co-Chairs