

**AMERICAN JUDICATURE SOCIETY
WASHINGTON CHAPTER**

February 22, 2005

*PRESIDENT
Mary Wechsler*

Rep. Helen Sommers
PO Box 40600
204 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

*PRESIDENT ELECT
Charles Wiggins*

Re: HB 1226

BY EMAIL AND 1ST CLASS MAIL

*SECRETARY
Lish Whitson*

Dear Representative Sommers:

*TREASURER
Robert Mitchell*

The Washington Chapter of the American Judicature Society supports Section 2 of HB 1226 which provides for campaign finance limitations in judicial campaigns. We have not taken a position on the other sections of the bill.

*IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT
Justice Faith Ireland*

The American Judicature Society has a long-standing commitment to judicial selection methods that result in the highest quality judges and to judicial independence. This proposed legislation protects judicial independence.

*BOARD MEMBERS
Justice Mary Fairhurst
Judge William Baker
Judge Ronald Cox
Judge Mary Alice
Theiler
Judge John Schultheis*

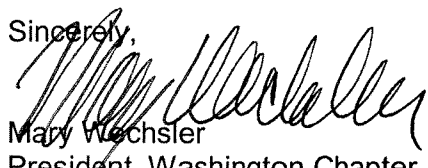
A fair and independent judiciary is critical for our civil and criminal justice system. Whenever there have been very large and significant campaign contributions, the appearance of fairness and integrity of the system may be put in question.

*COMMITTEE CHAIRS
Robert Mitchell
Charles Wiggins
Lish Whitson*

Given the need for impartiality and independence and the goal of avoiding even the appearance that judges' decisions may be influenced by campaign contributions, contribution limits are at least as important for judicial elections as they are for other campaigns for public office.

*WSBA LIAISON
Gail Stone*

Sincerely,


Mary Wechsler
President, Washington Chapter
American Judicature Society