AMERICAN JUDICATURE SOCIETY
WASHINGTON CHAPTER

February 22, 2005

Re: HB 1226

BY EMAIL AND 1ST CLASS MAIL

Dear Representative Sommers:

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.

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.

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.

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.

Sincerely,

Mary Wechsler
President, Washington Chapter
American Judicature Society