

JUDICIAL COMPENSATION COMMISSION

MAY 2026



OFFICE OF COURT ADMINISTRATION

The Commission shall consider the following factors in recommending proper salaries:

1. Skill and experience required of the judgeship

2. Value of compensable service performed in comparison to judicial compensation in other states and the federal government

3. Value of comparable service performed in the private sector, including private judging, arbitration, and mediation

4. Compensation of attorneys in the private sector

5. Cost of living and changes in the cost of living

6. Compensation of other public officials in the state

7. Other factors normally or traditionally considered in determining judicial compensation

8. Most importantly, level of overall compensation adequate to attract the most highly qualified individuals to serve without unreasonable economic hardship and with judicial independence unaffected by financial concerns



The Office of Court Administration shall produce a report that must include:

1. The rate at which state judges resign from office or do not seek reelection

2. The reason for action

3. Whether the compensation of state judges exceeds, is equal to, or is less than the compensation of judges at corresponding levels in the 5 states closest in population to this state

4. Whether the compensation of state judges exceeds, is equal to, or is less than the average salary of lawyers engaged in the private practice of law



JCC RECOMMENDATIONS

89th (2025)

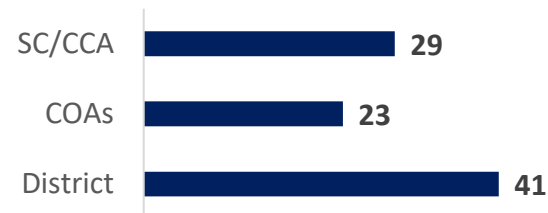
- 30% increase to base pay of district judge
- Create an additional tier in current compensation structure that would increase district judge base salary by an additional 10% for judges with more than 12 years of experience
- Delink legislative retirement from judicial salaries in its entirety
- Build in cost-of-living adjustments to mitigate the lagging of salary adjustments in the future

National Rank of Texas Salary for Judge with 4-8 Years Experience



88th (2023)

- 22% increase to the base pay of a district judge split with an 11% increase in 2024 and another 11% increase in 2025
- Amend current law to allow cross-credit between prosecutors and judges when calculating salaries based on the tiered system



87th (2021)

- 10% increase to base pay of district judge



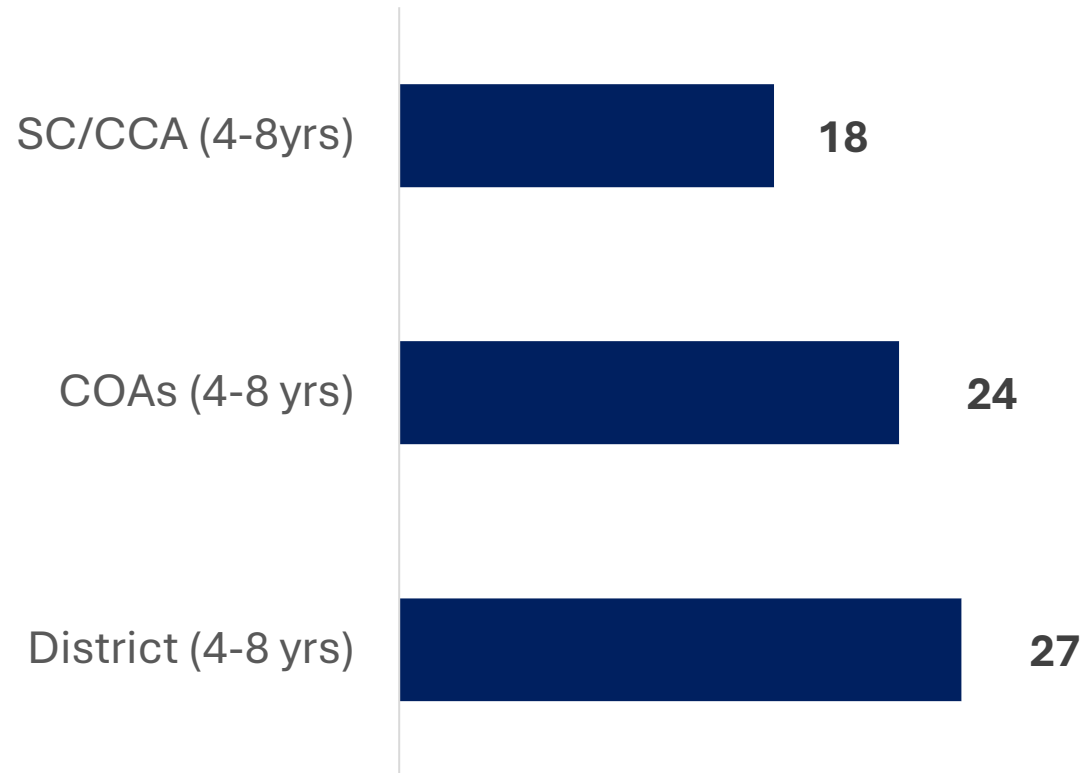
Salary Summary for State Judges as of September 1, 2025

Judge	State Base Salary (Based on Experience)	Maximum County Supplement	Maximum Salary	Average Salary Incl. Supplement (Mar. 2026)	State Longevity Pay (12+ Years)
Justice/Judge – Supreme Court or Court of Criminal Appeals	0-4: \$210,000 4-8: \$231,000 8+: \$252,000 Chief Justice Additional Salary: \$14,700	N/A	\$264,600	\$243,333	\$12,600
Justice – 15th Court of Appeals	0-4: \$192,500 4-8: \$211,750 8+: \$231,000 Chief Justice Additional Salary: \$14,350	N/A	\$258,300	\$235,750	\$12,300
Justice – 1st – 14th Court of Appeals	0-4: \$192,500 4-8: \$211,750 8+: \$231,000 Chief Justice Additional Salary: \$13,475	up to \$12,500	up to \$255,050	\$224,144	\$11,500
Business Court Judge	0-4: \$200,000 4-8: \$217,500 8+: \$235,000 Administrative Presiding Judge Additional Salary: \$12,250	N/A	\$245,500	\$210,500	\$10,500
District Judge	0-4: \$175,000 4-8: \$192,500 8+: \$210,000	up to \$25,000	up to \$245,500	\$218,668	\$10,500



RANK OF TEXAS SALARIES

AMONGST THE 50 STATES, JANUARY 2026

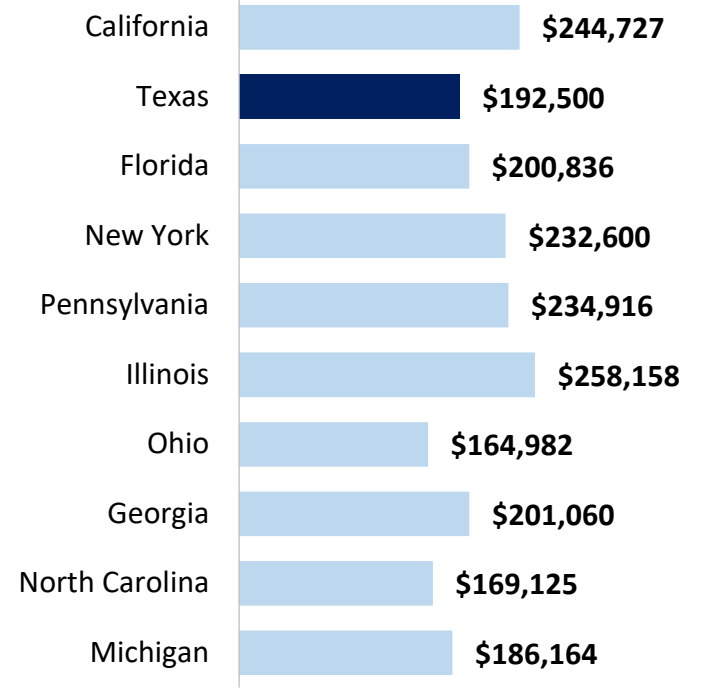
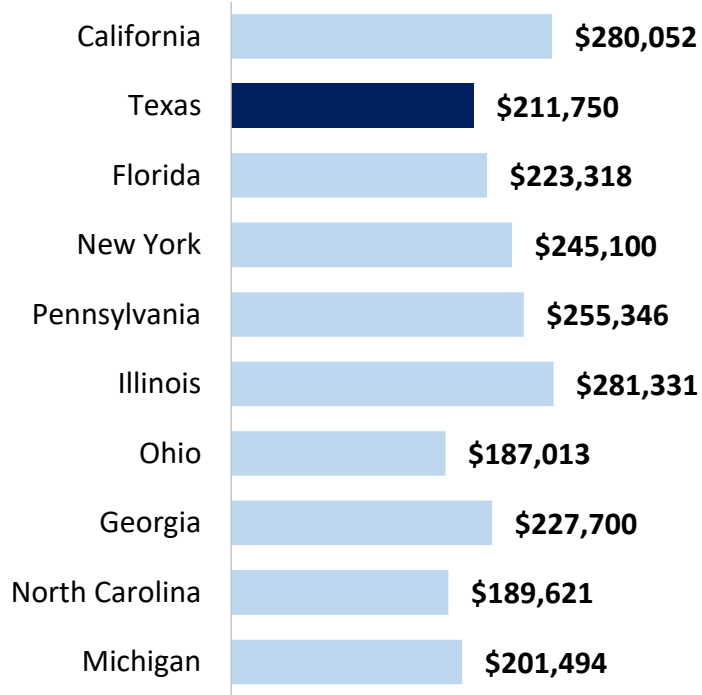
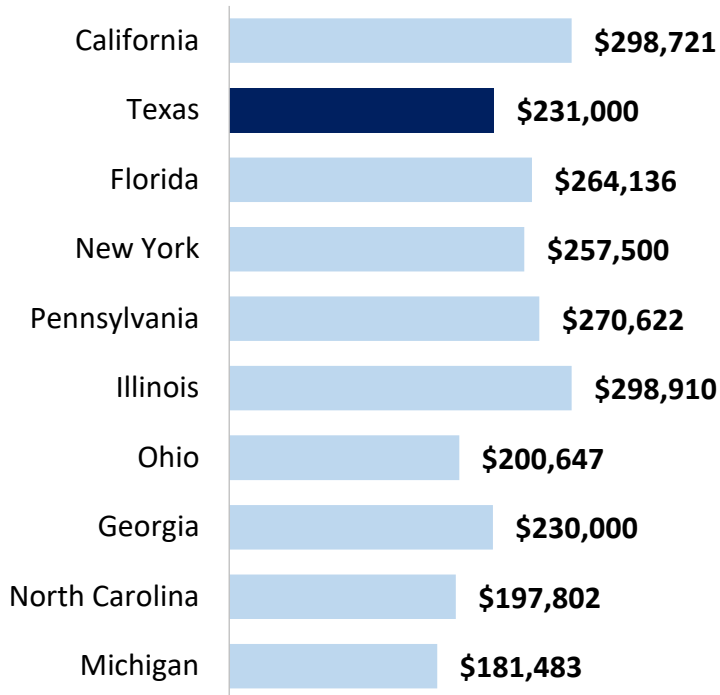


Although Texas is the second most populous, the 2nd tier of Texas judicial salaries ranks in the bottom half of the 10 most populous states.

Highest Appellate

Intermediate Appellate

General Jurisdiction



Texas Rank # 6

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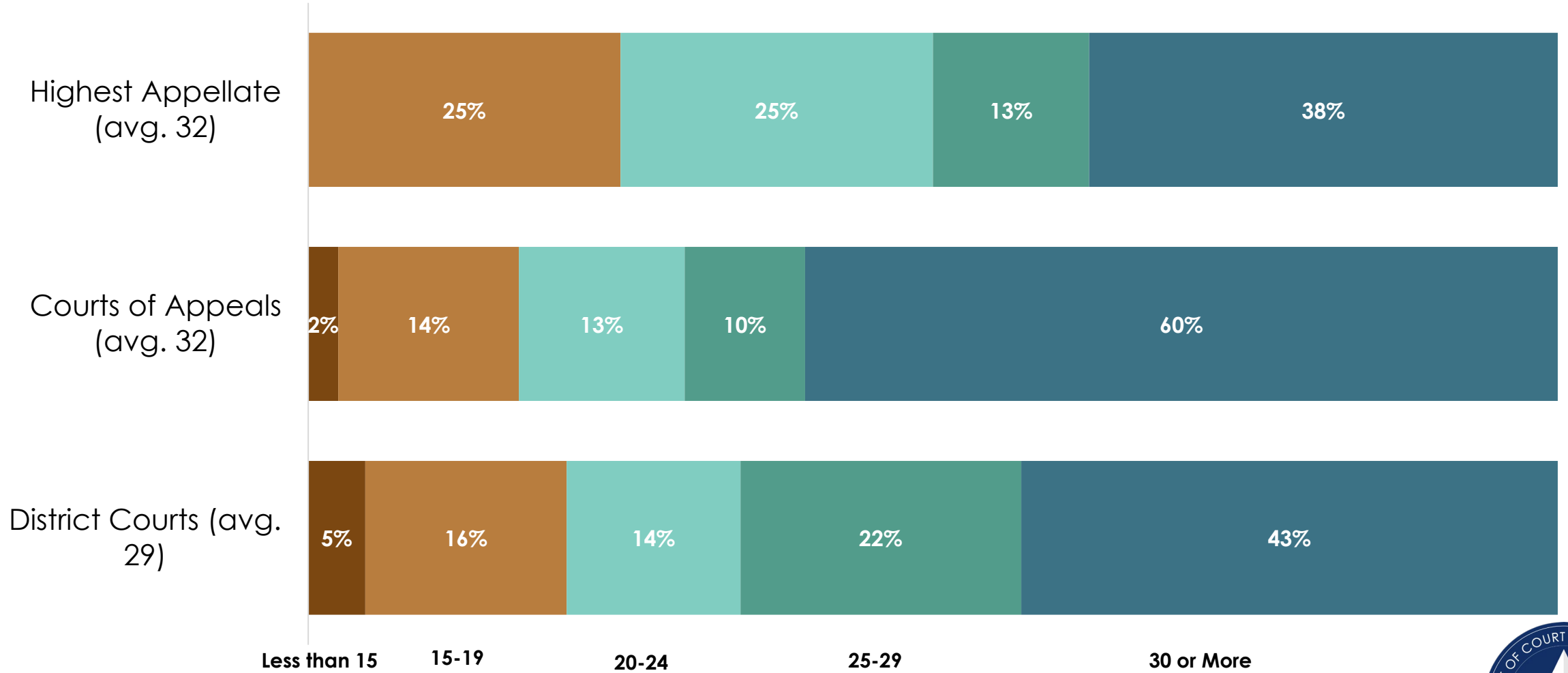
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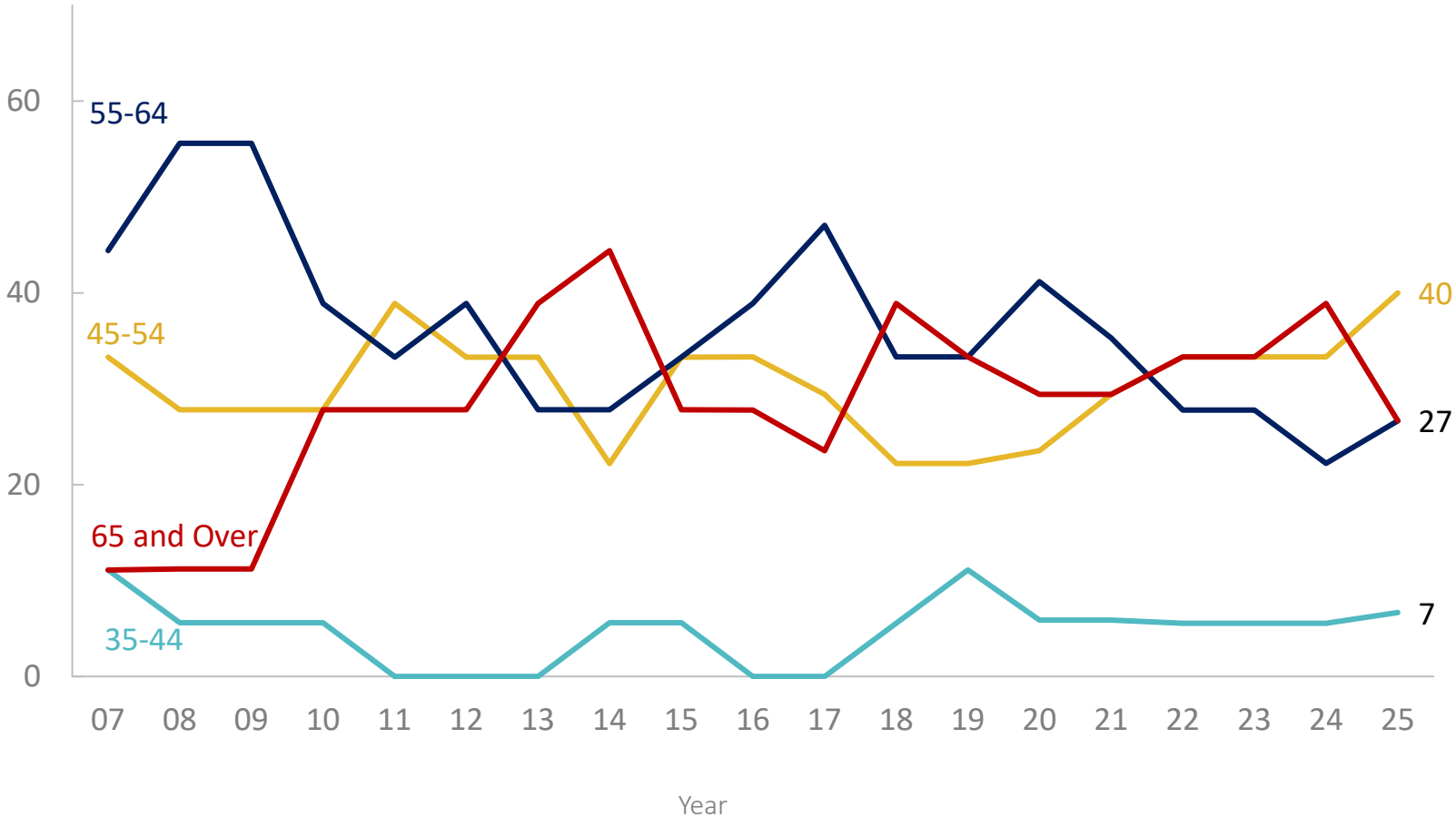
Judicial
Experience &
Qualifications

80% of appellate and district judges had 20 or more years of experience as an attorney, and **45%** had more than 30 years.

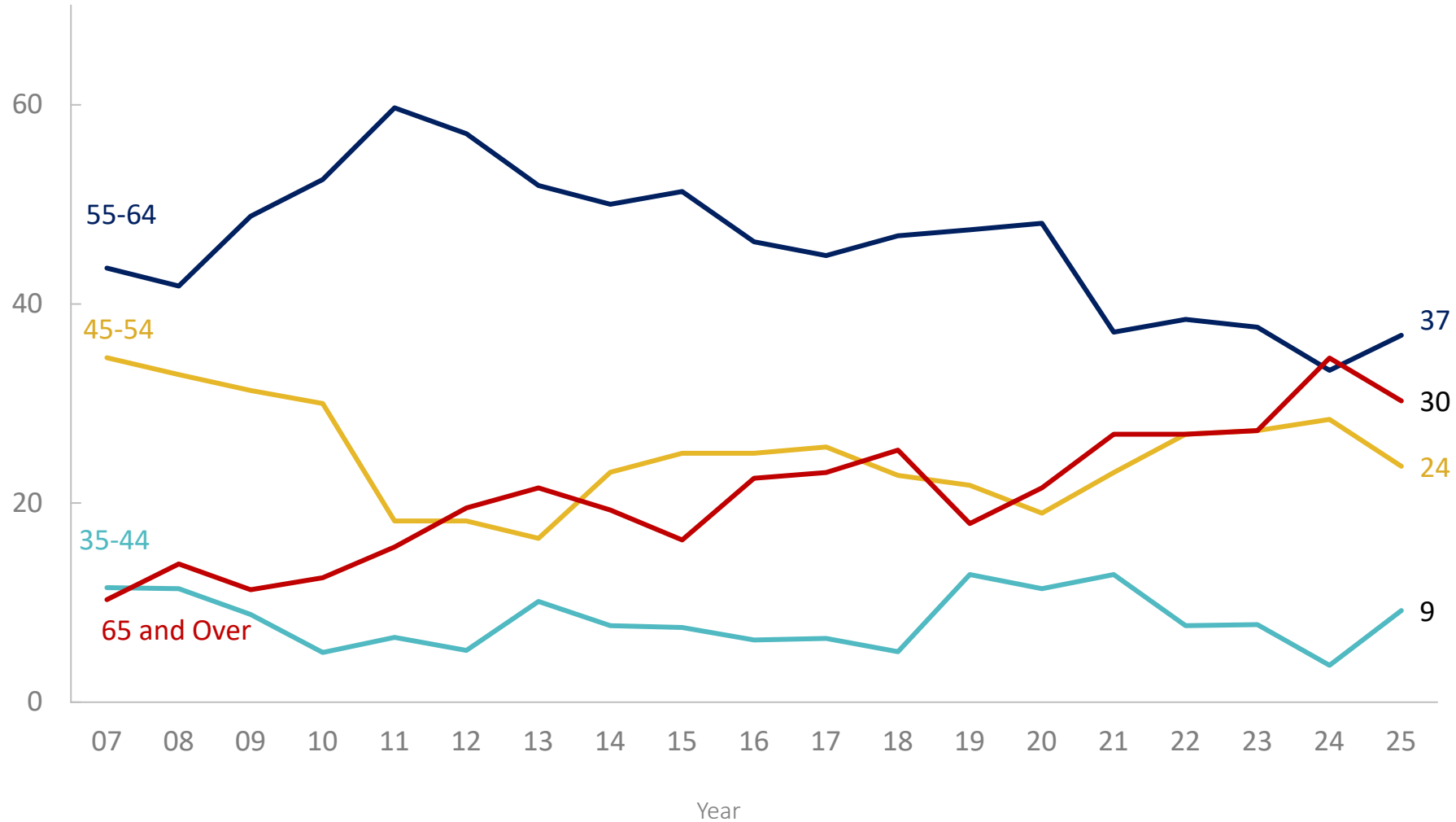


53 percent of judges in the **highest appellate courts** were 55 or older in 2025, the lowest percentage over the last 2 decades.

Age of Judges as of September 1

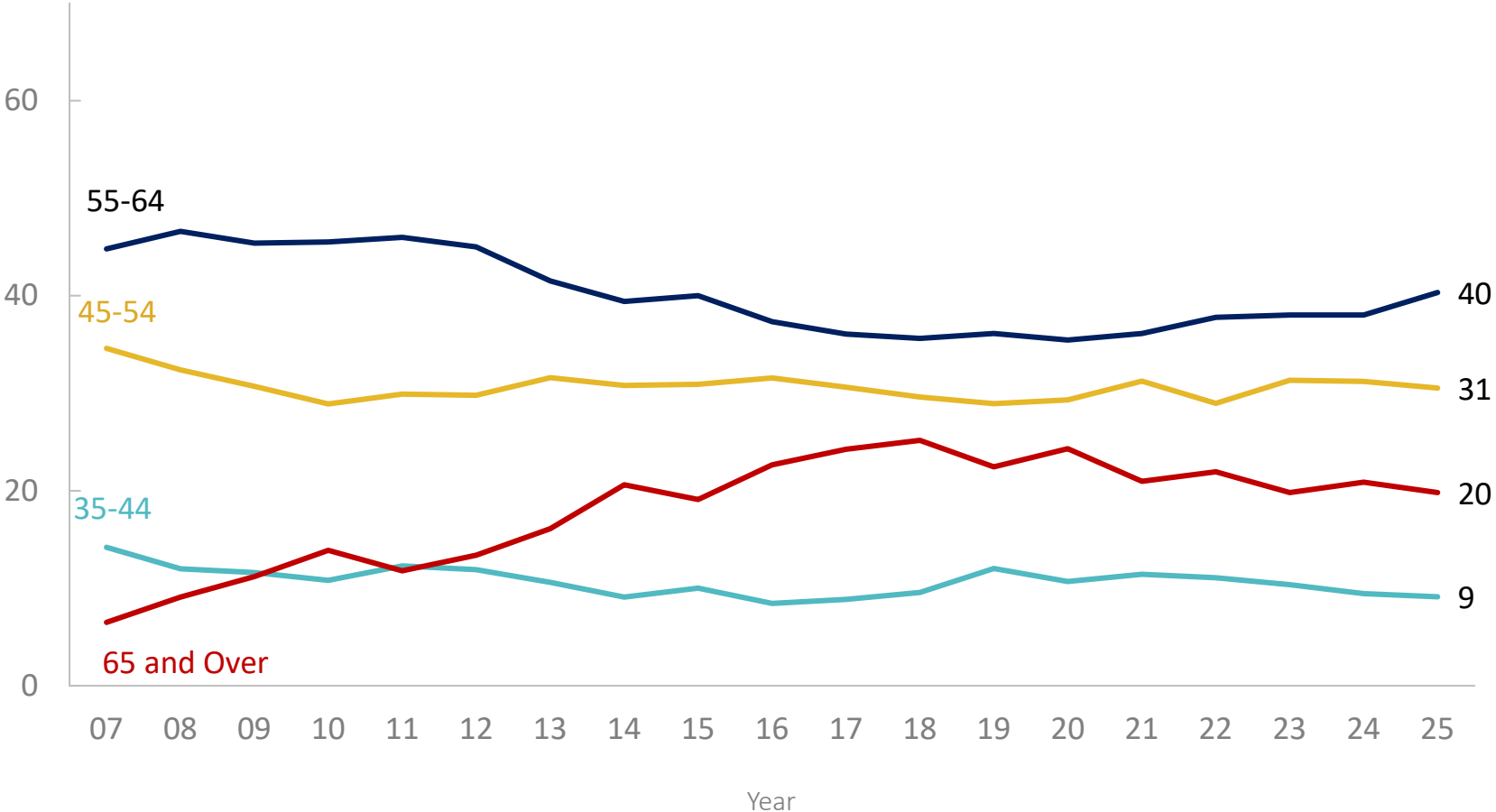


67 percent of judges in the courts of appeals were 55 or older.

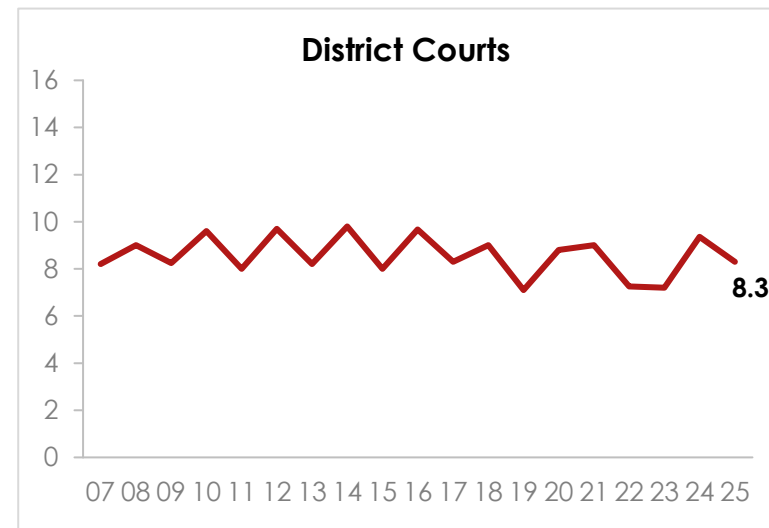
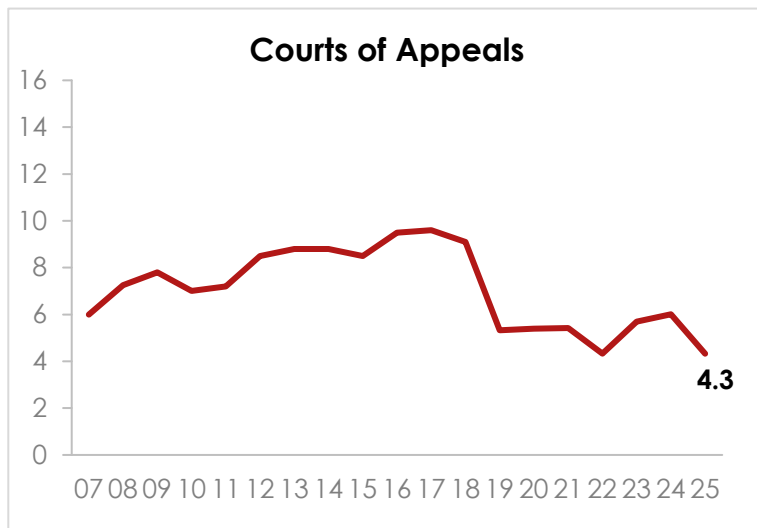
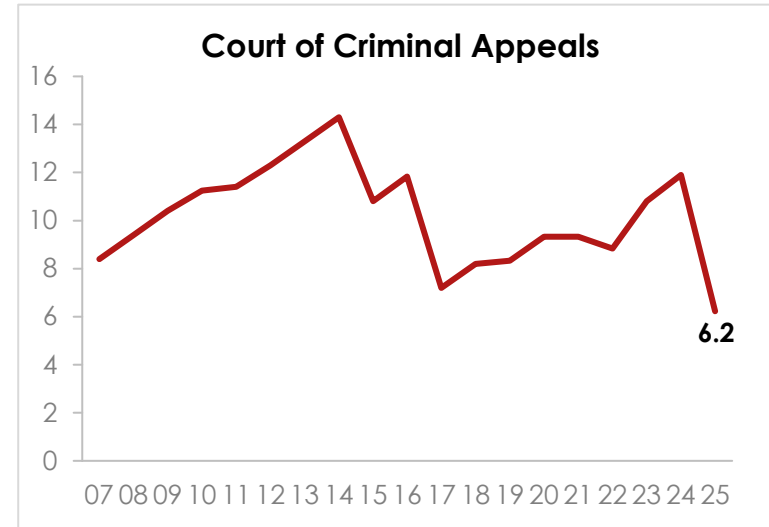
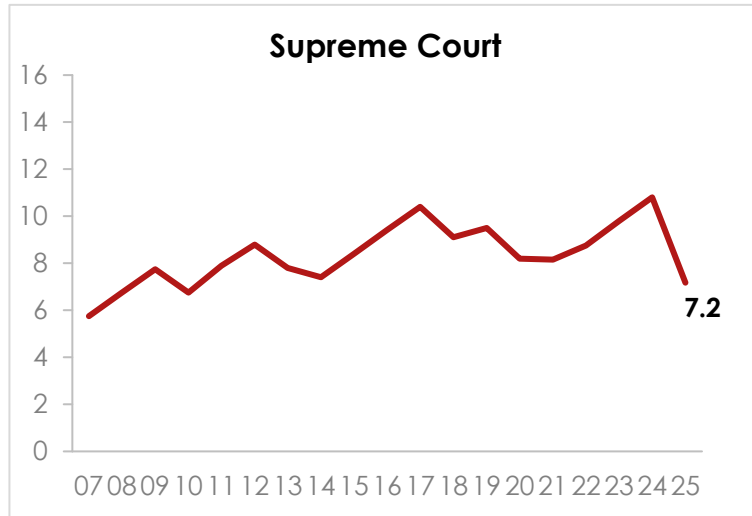


60 percent of judges in the **district courts** were 55 or older.

Age of Judges as of September 1



Average Years of Service on Current Bench as of September 1



JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS

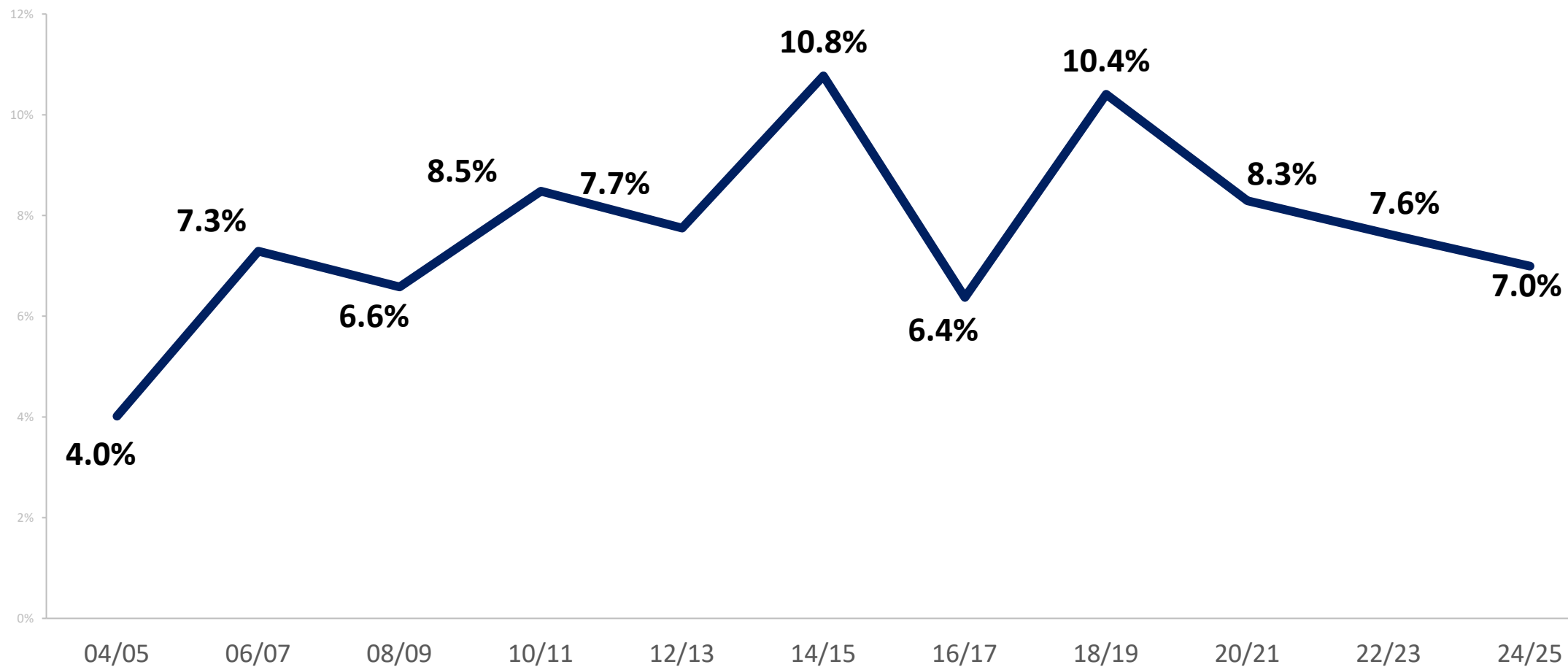
- Article 5 of Texas Constitution was amended November 2, 2021.
 - Applies to appellate and district judges first elected or appointed on or after January 1, 2025.
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- Section 2(b), Article V, Texas Constitution, is amended to read as follows: (b) No person shall be eligible to serve in the office of Chief Justice or Justice of the Supreme Court unless the person: (1) is licensed to practice law in the **State of Texas**; (2) is, at the time of election, a citizen of the United States and a resident of the State of Texas; (3) has attained the age of thirty-five years; (4) has been either: (A) a practicing lawyer **licensed in the State of Texas for at least ten years**; or (B) a **practicing lawyer licensed in the State of Texas** and judge of a **state court or county court established by the Legislature by statute for a combined total of [court of record together] at least ten years; and (5) during the time required by Subdivision (4) of this subsection has not had the person's license to practice law revoked, suspended, or subject to a probated suspension.**
 - Section 7, Article V, Texas Constitution, is amended to read as follows: Sec.7. (b) Each district judge shall be elected by the qualified voters at a General Election. **To be eligible for appointment or election as a district judge**, a person must: (1) be a citizen of the United States and a resident of this State; (2) licensed to practice law in this State; (3) have been a practicing lawyer or a Judge of a Court in this State, or both combined, for **eight** [~~four~~] years next preceding the judge's election, **during which time the judge's license to practice law has not been revoked, suspended, or subject to a probated suspension;**



Judicial Turnover

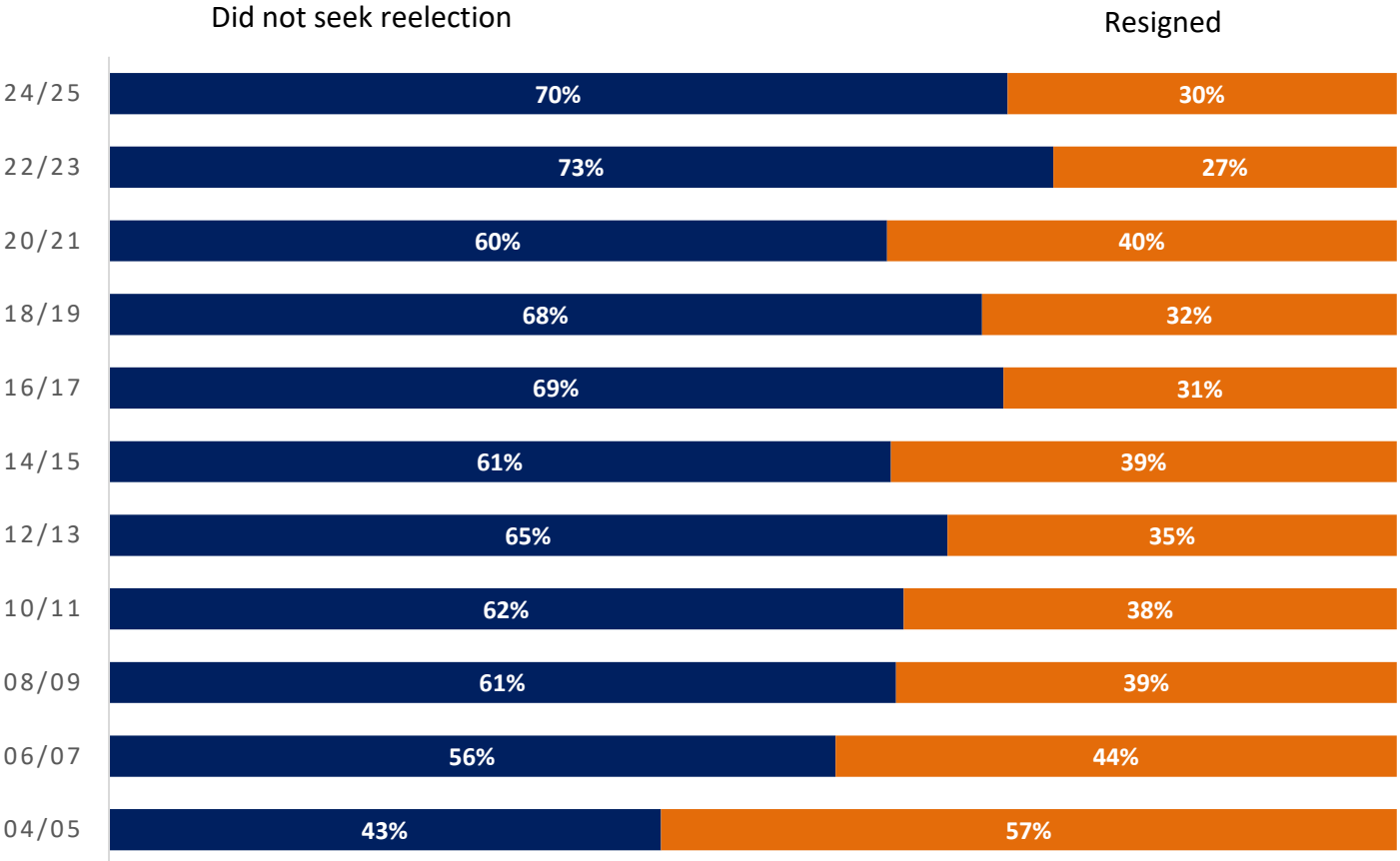


Voluntary turnover is typically higher in years with a general election, as a greater number of judges decide not to run for reelection. However, the voluntary turnover rate decreased in FYs 24/25.

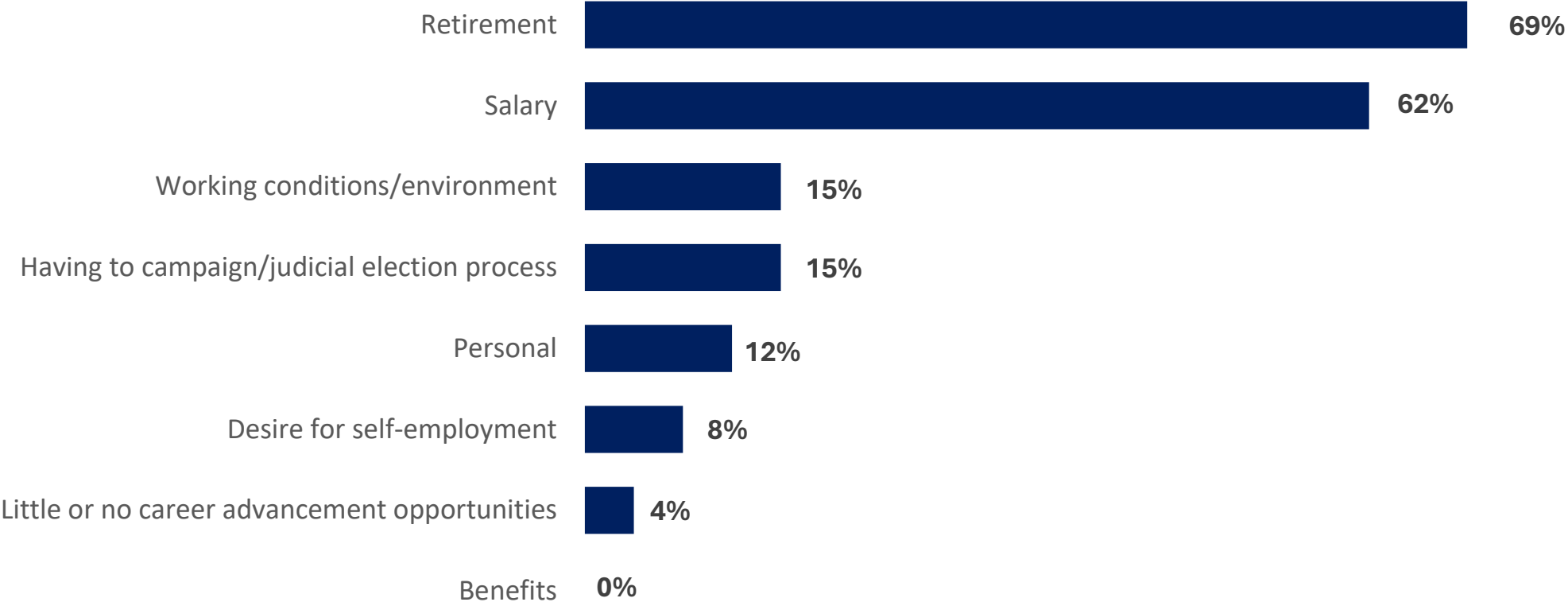


The number of judges voluntarily leaving office by **not seeking reelection** has been generally increasing since the fall of 2005.

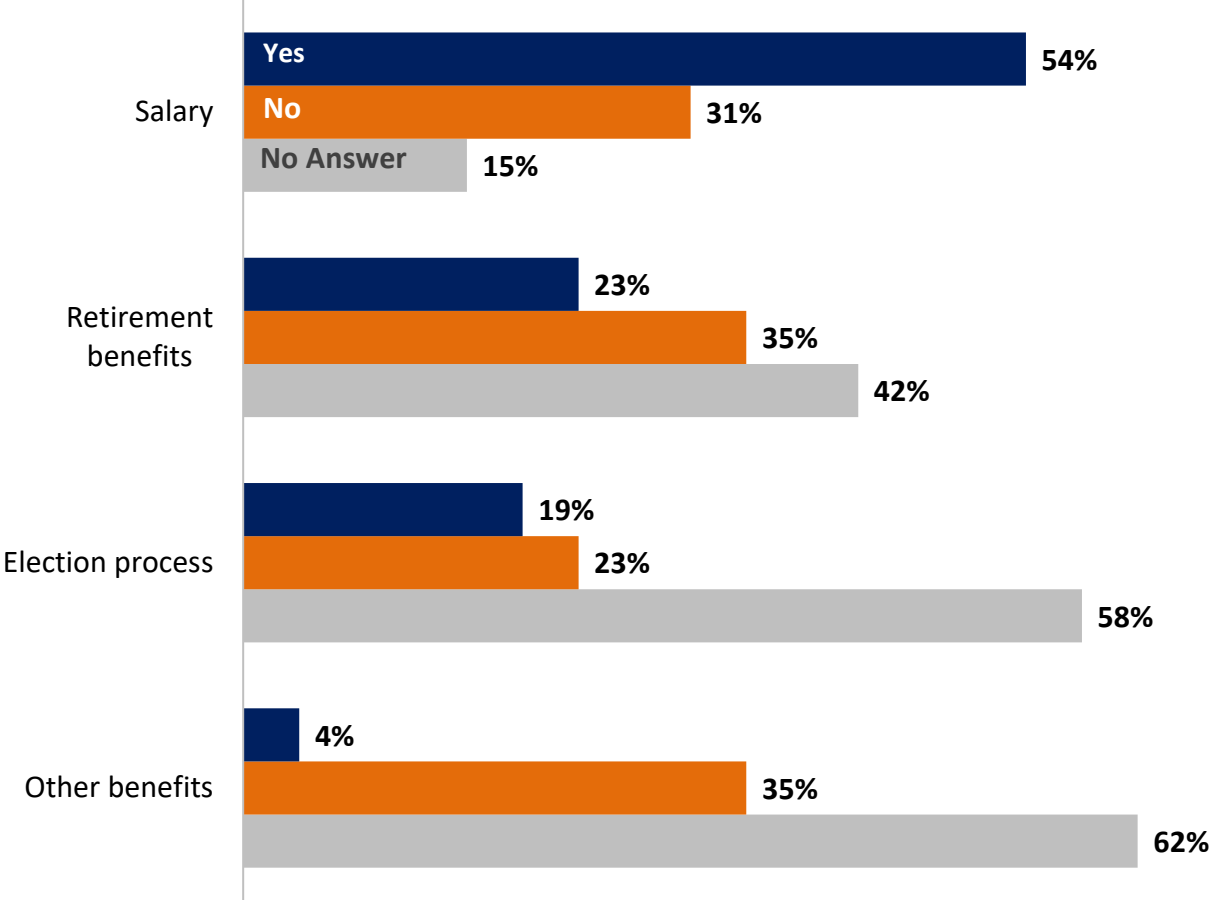
Judges Leaving Voluntarily




Almost 70 percent of judges indicated that **retirement** was a significant factor, a large decrease over the 91 percent identifying retirement in the last biennium. More than 60 percent of judges indicated that **salary** was a major factor, a significant increase from the 26 percent naming salary in the previous period.



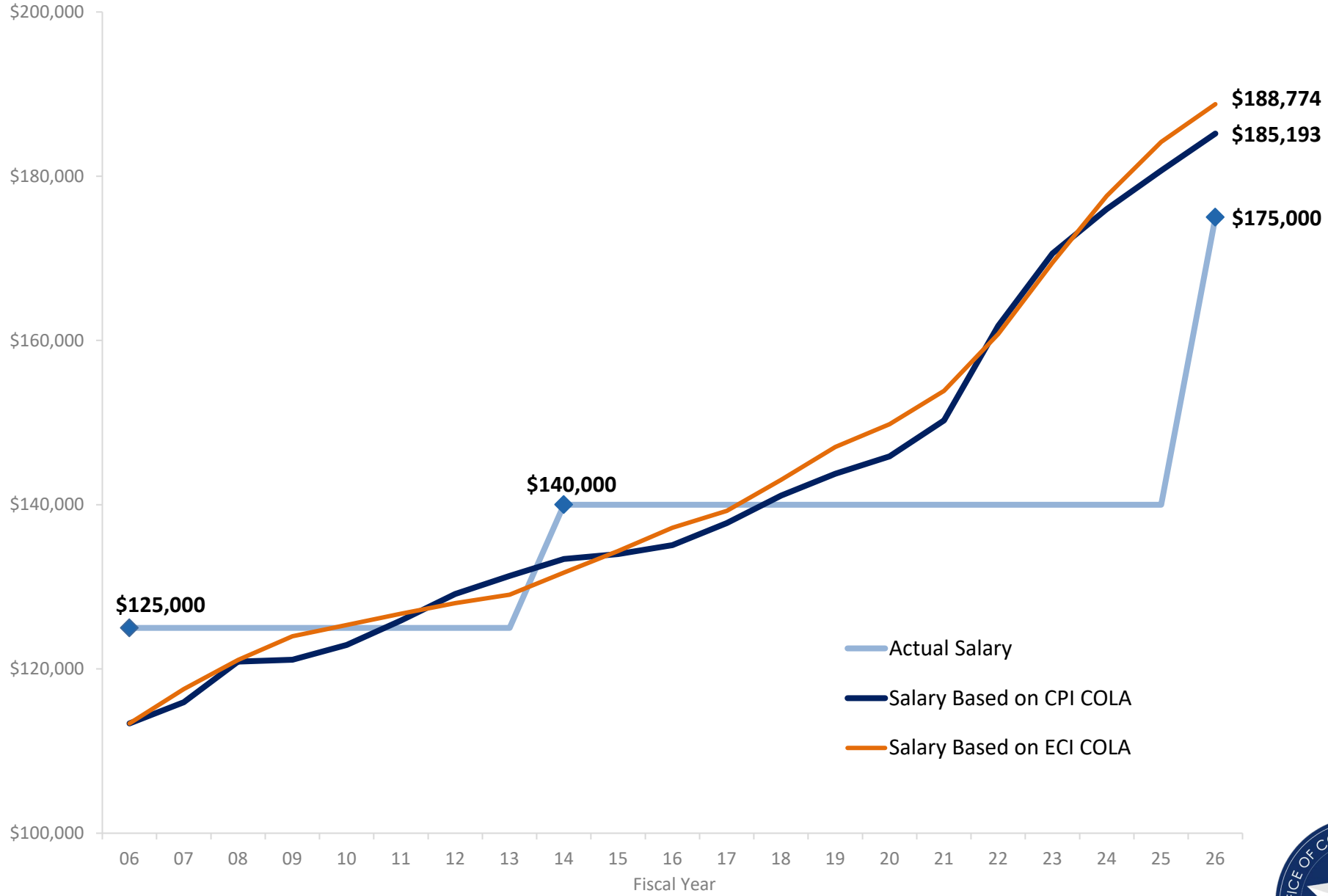
More than half of judges indicated that a change in **salary** would have affected their decision to leave, almost a quarter named a change in **retirement benefits**, and 19 percent indicated that a change in the election process would have influenced their decision.



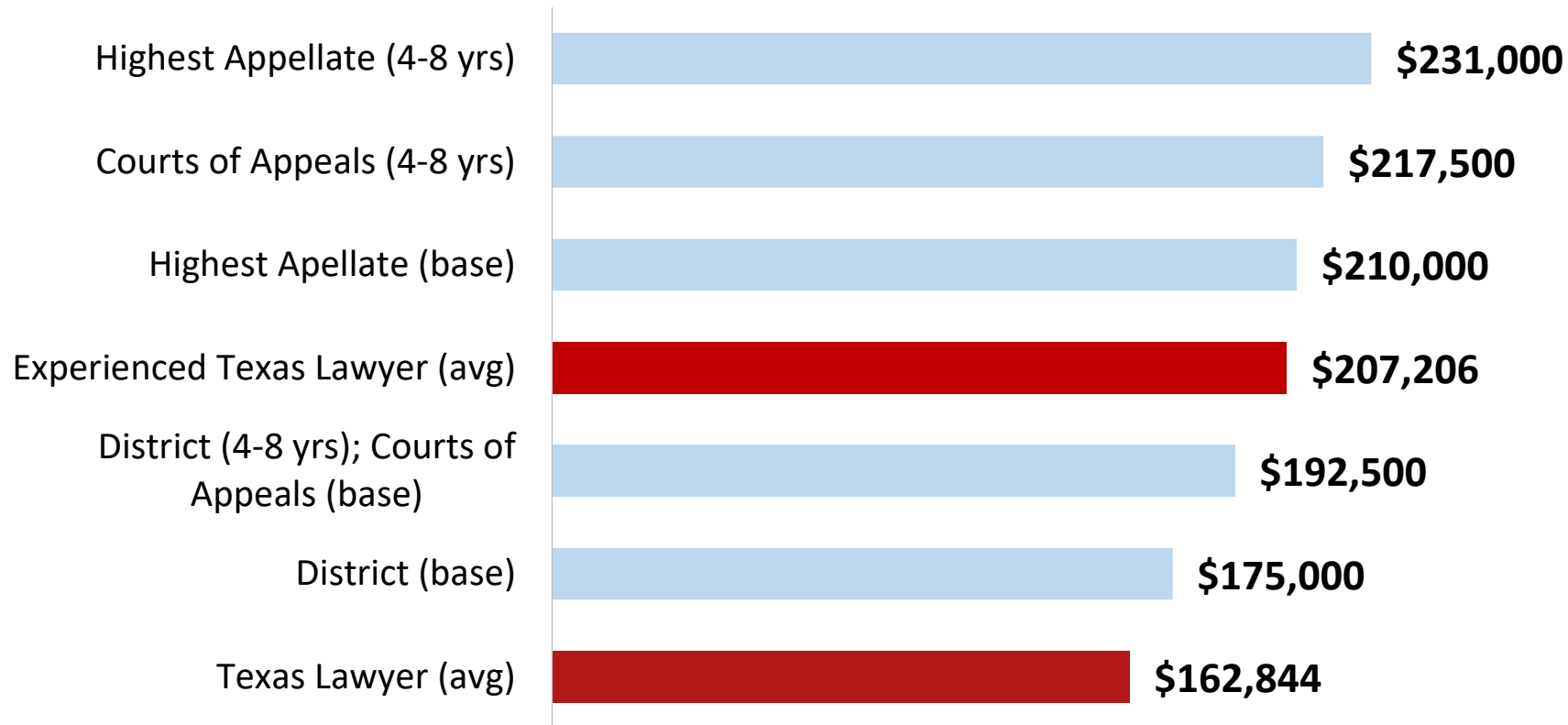


Cost of Living
and Changes
in the Cost of
Living

Base State Salary of District Judges If COLA Had Been Implemented in FY 2006



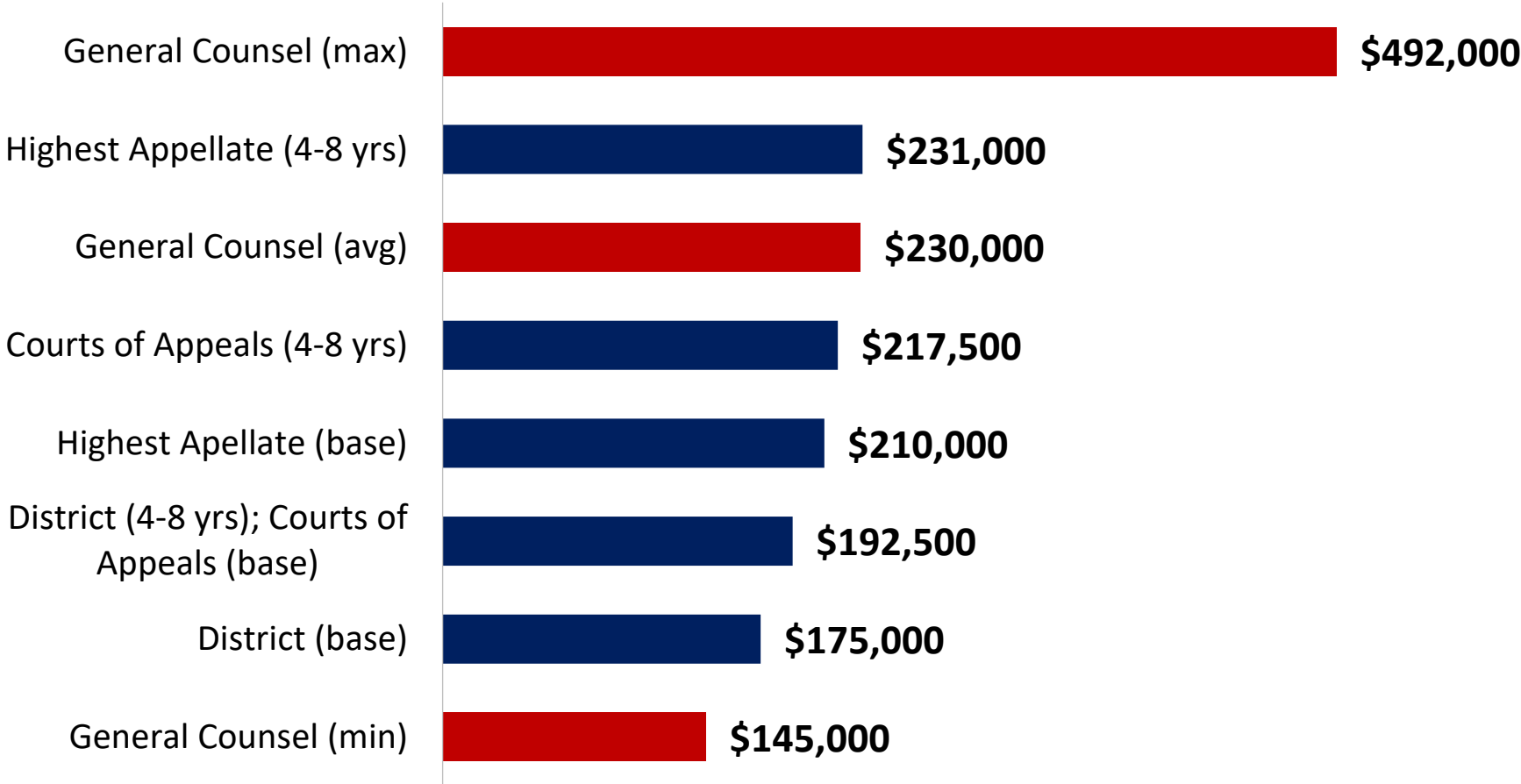
The current lower 2 tiers of salary for district judges and the base salary of courts of appeals justices trail the average salary of an **experienced** Texas lawyer in 2024. The corresponding salaries of appellate court judges are only slightly higher.



“Experienced”: the wages earned by the upper 2/3 of all workers in the occupation.
Texas Workforce Commission

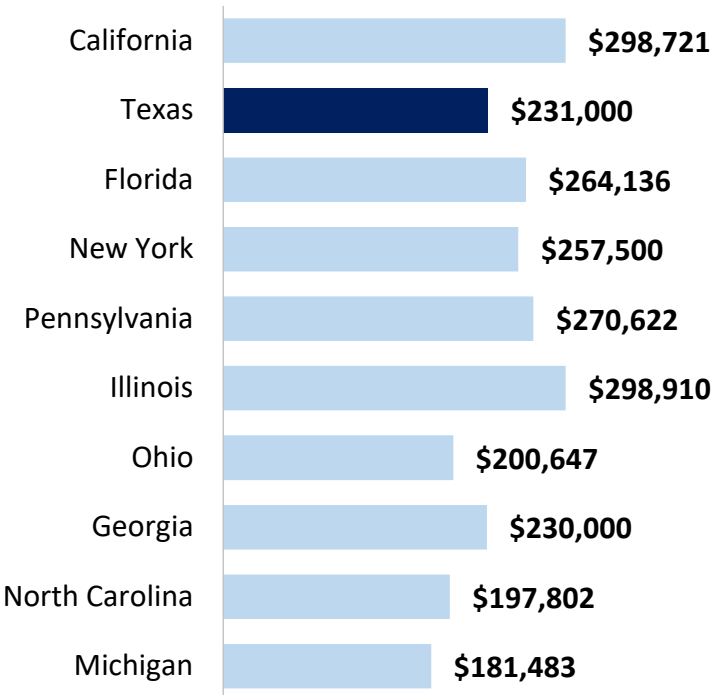


Data from the largest 35 Texas State agencies reflects an average **general counsel** salary of \$230K with a range of \$145 to \$492K.



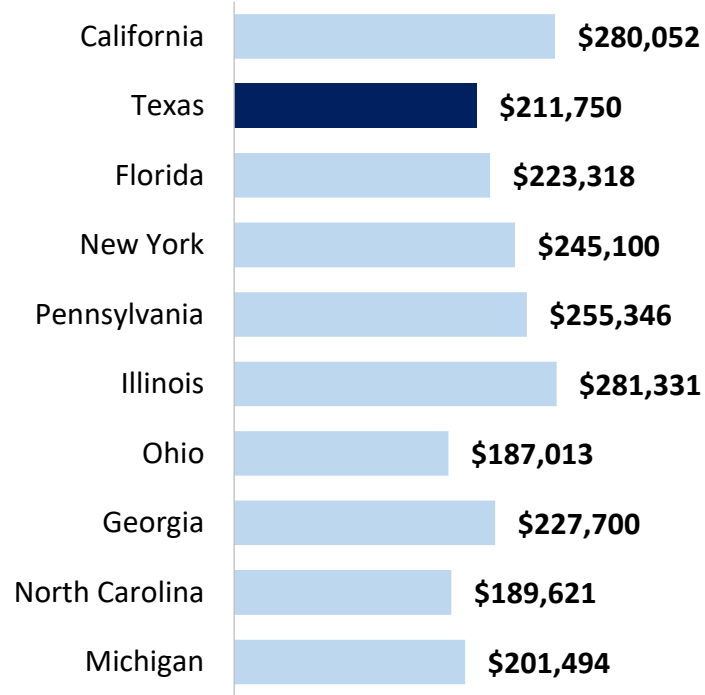
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Highest Appellate



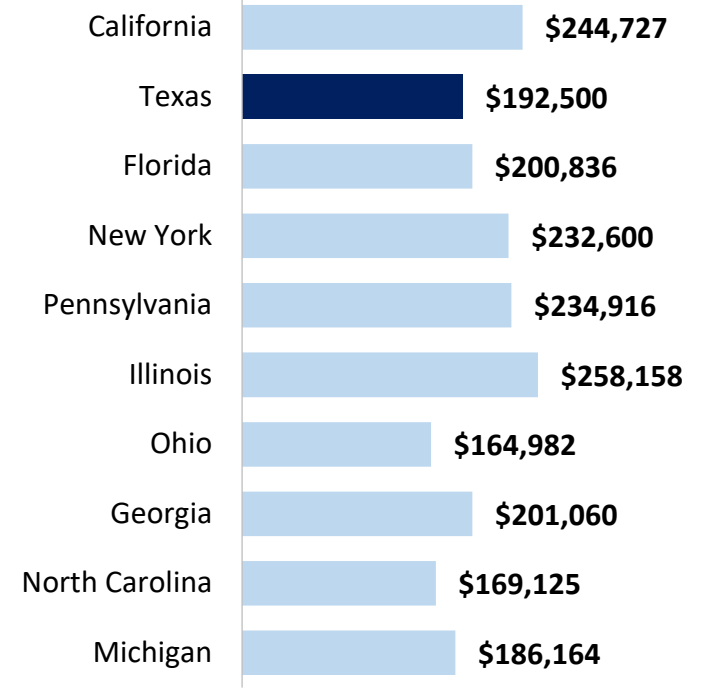
Texas Rank # 6

Intermediate Appellate



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General Jurisdiction

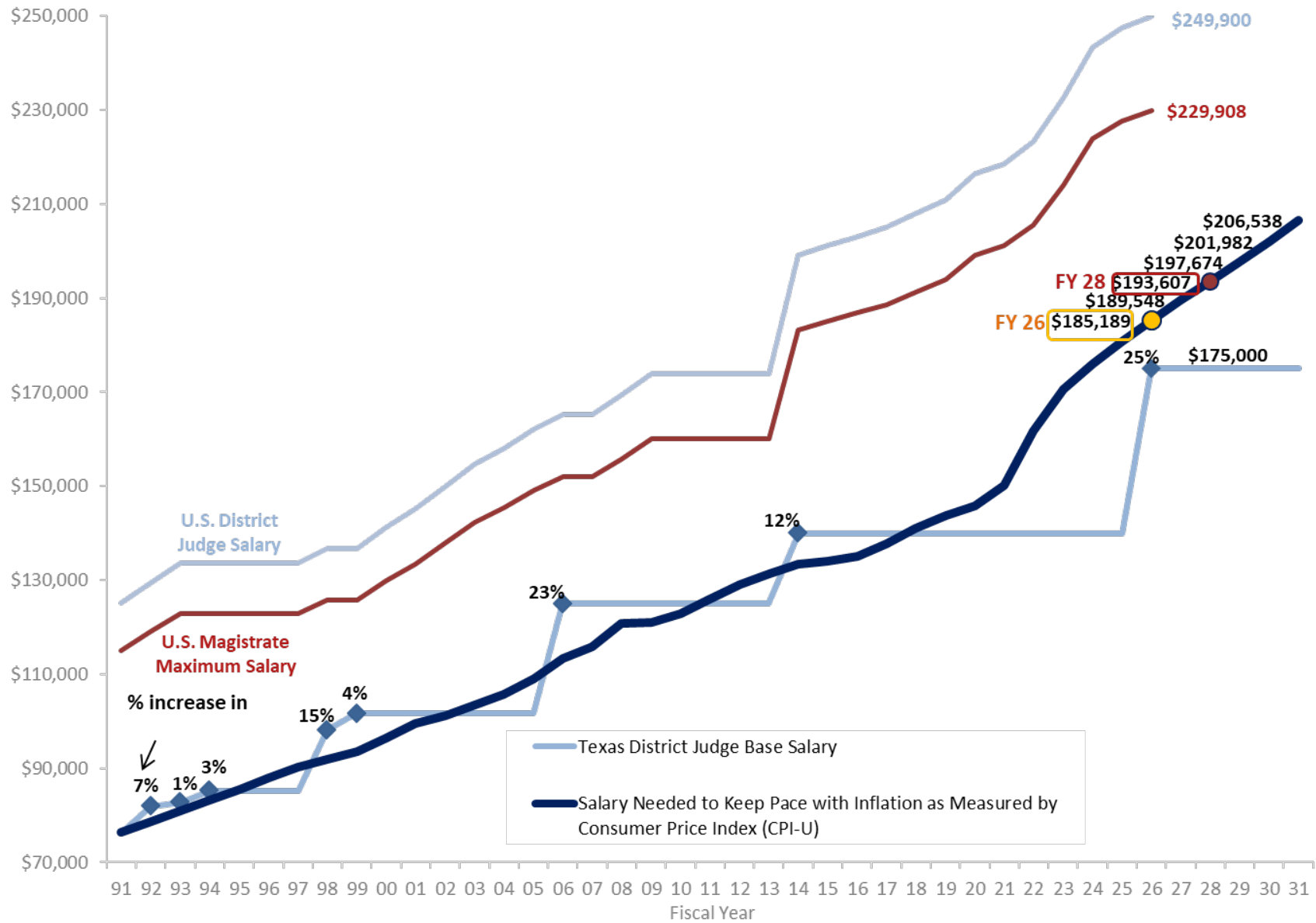


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Comparison of Base State Salary of Texas District Judges to Inflation

To keep up with inflation by FY 28, the base salary would need to increase by 10.6%.



Salaries of Other Public Officials in the State

State Constitutional Officials

Governor	\$153,750
Lieutenant Governor	\$7,200
Attorney General	\$153,750
Comptroller of Public Accounts	\$153,750
Secretary of State	\$226,550
Land Commissioner	\$140,938

Deans, Presidents, and Chancellors of Public University Systems

Dean (avg base salary)	\$366,489
President/Chancellor (avg base salary)	\$612,049

City Attorneys

Top 40 Cities (Populations over 104,000)

\$269,120 avg



Questions?

