

Subject: News Release -- Chief Justice Alexander Seeks Re-Election

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CHIEF JUSTICE ALEXANDER TO SEEK RE-ELECTION

Advises Limits on Campaign Contributions

Gerry Alexander, Chief Justice of the Washington Supreme Court, announced today that he will seek re-election to the Supreme Court in the fall 2006 election. Chief Justice Alexander has served on the Supreme Court since 1995. Before being elected to that court Alexander served as a judge of the Court of Appeals for ten years. His service at the Court of Appeals followed an 11-year tenure on the Superior Court for Thurston and Mason counties. Chief Justice Alexander is the only member of the current Supreme Court to have served on three levels of Washington's courts.

In his announcement, Chief Justice Alexander expressed concern about the specter of large campaign contributions in judicial elections and the impact such contributions may have on the public's perception of the fairness of judicial proceedings. To address this concern, Chief Justice Alexander has instructed his campaign committee to enforce a campaign contribution limit for each election equivalent to the statutory campaign contribution limit applicable to candidates for the Executive Branch who run statewide. Chief Justice Alexander pointed out that there are currently no campaign contribution limits applicable to the Judicial Branch and, speaking for himself and not for the Judicial Branch, he indicated that he would personally support appropriate legislation to create campaign contribution limits for Supreme Court races consistent with those applicable for statewide Executive Branch positions.

Chief Justice Alexander said that he looks forward to continuing to provide leadership to the Supreme Court and the Judicial Branch. He pointed to successes he has had in obtaining increased state funding for the operations of Washington trial courts, as well as for the provision of legal assistance to indigent persons in civil and criminal cases. The Chief Justice is also proud of Supreme Court efforts to make the court more accessible to the public by traveling to other locations in the state for hearings. During his tenure on the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Alexander has been a strong supporter of televising all of the Supreme Court's hearings on public television. The Chief Justice, noting the provision in the Washington Constitution which indicates that justice is to be administered openly, said that he was particularly proud of the Supreme Court's enactment of court rules making court records, at all levels of court, open and accessible to the public.

Chief Justice Alexander is committed to working with the legislature to increase the daily fee that is paid to jurors. Currently, the fee is \$10 per day, an amount that was established in 1959. "The jury," Alexander said, "is the crown jewel of America's system of justice and it is important that we reduce the financial burden that our good citizens incur when they answer a jury summons." He observed that, "while \$10 may have covered a juror's out-of-pocket expenses in 1959, it no longer does.

The honorary co-chairs are former Governors Daniel Evans and Booth Gardner, former Supreme Court Justices Faith Ireland, Robert Utter, Keith Callow, Vernon Pearson, Charles Z. Smith and Robert Guy. Campaign chair is Tacoma attorney Stuart Morgan and treasurer is Olympia attorney F. Parks Weaver.

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Paid for by the Committee to Re-Elect Justice Gerry Alexander, Position 8, 525 Columbia St. NW, Suite 202, Olympia, WA 98501-1098