

# Texas Judicial Compensation

Alliance for Judicial Funding

December 2004

# A Quality Judiciary Requires Competitive Pay

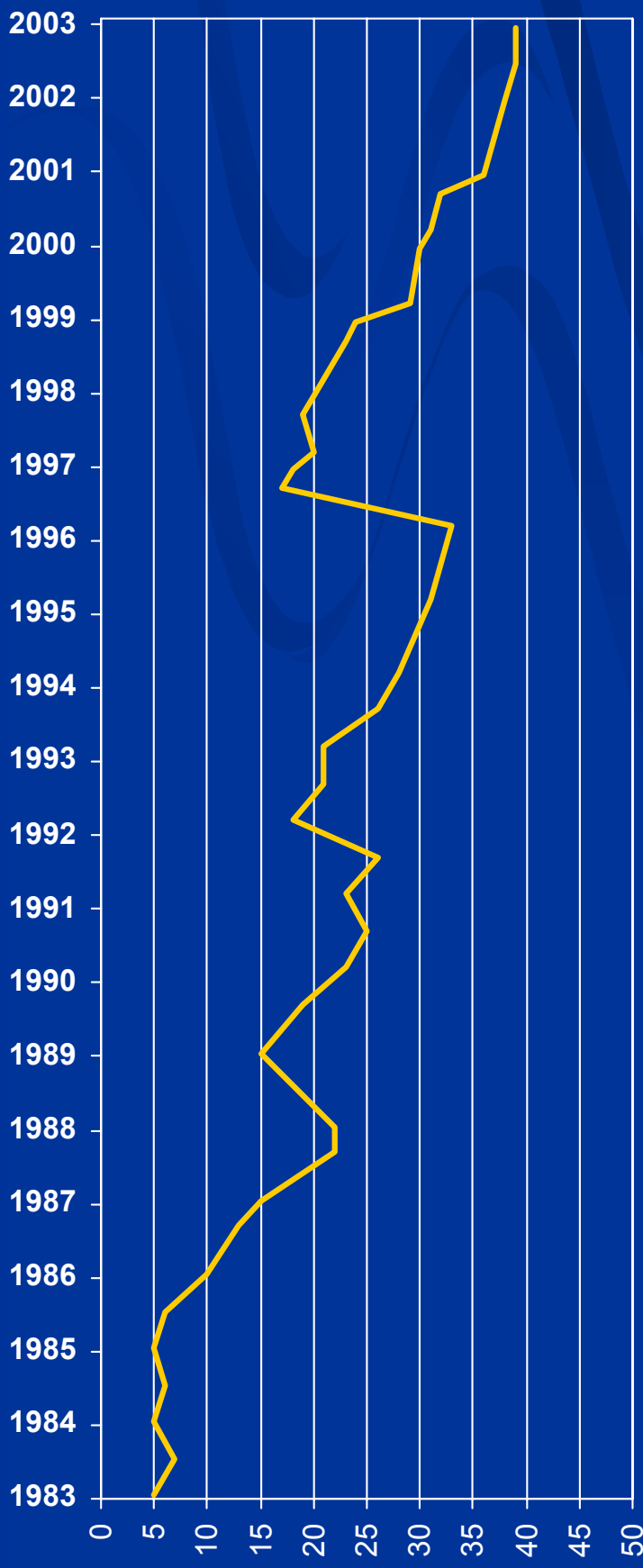
- Judicial compensation must be high enough to attract the most able attorneys to the bench and retain them
- Lack of overall compensation system has resulted in loss of good judges who cannot afford to serve
- Texas ranks in bottom 1/4 of all states for pay to highest court and trial judges and bottom 1/3 for appeals judges
- Compensation system in the State needs an overhaul, to maintain an experienced, quality judiciary

# Texas Judicial Salaries Are Not Competitive

- State of Texas currently pays these judicial salaries (excluding county supplements, if any), with 95/90 percent salary linkage among the courts:
  - Texas Supreme Court: \$113,000
  - Courts of Appeals: \$107,350
  - District Courts: \$101,700
- Current law has no system for periodic salary review
- These salaries are not competitive with comparable states

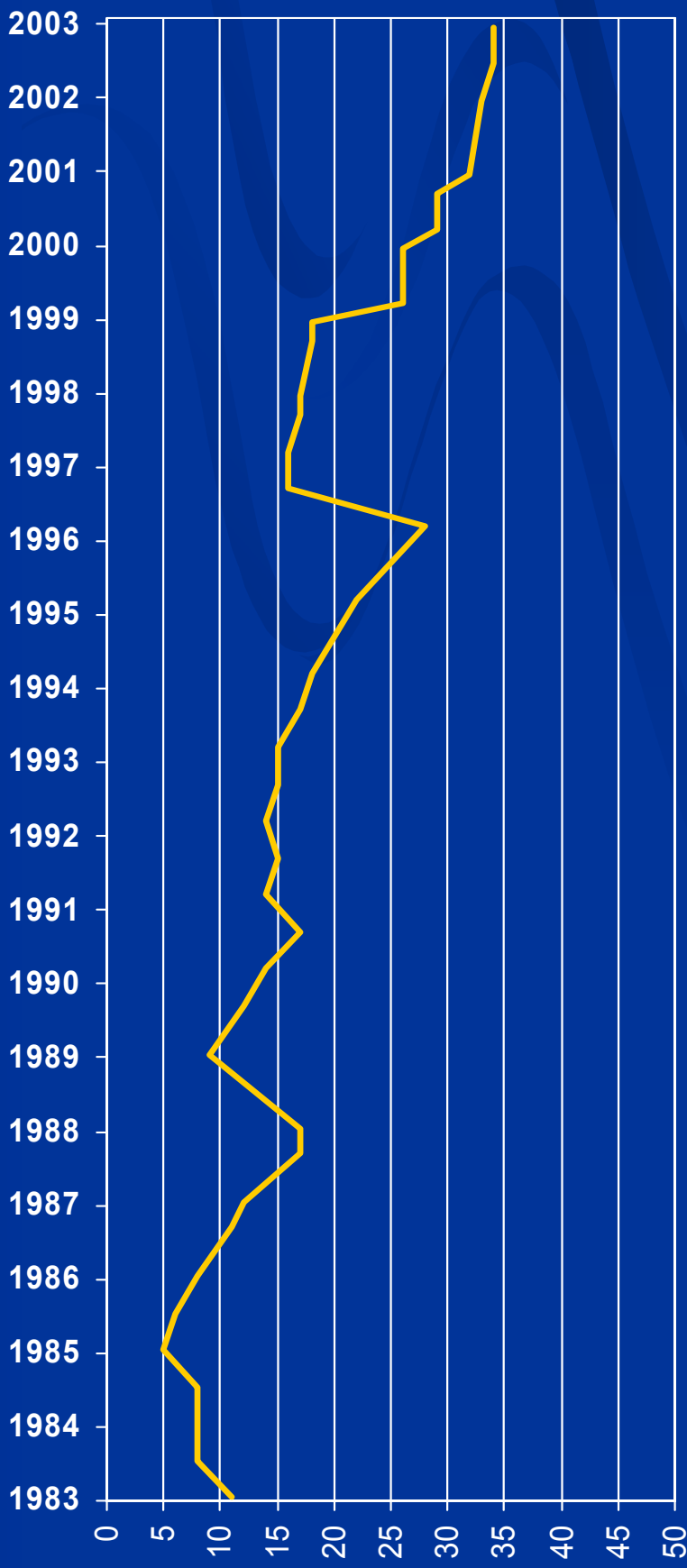
# Highest Appellate Judges Are Among Lowest Paid

- Texas Highest Courts salary ranks 39<sup>th</sup> -- and falling -- among all states in salaries for highest courts



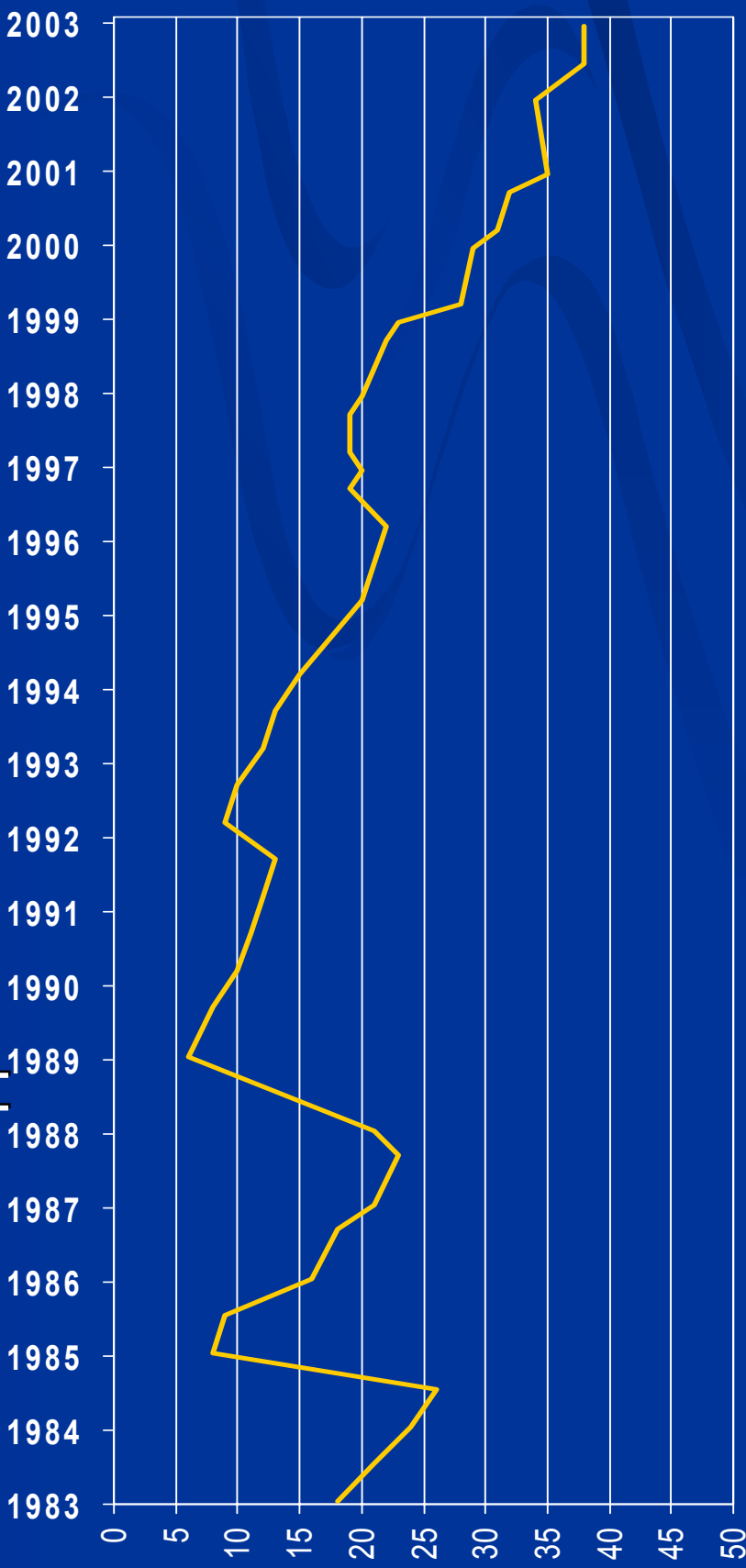
# Intermediate Appellate Justices Are Among Lowest Paid

- Texas Courts of Appeals salary ranks 34<sup>th</sup> -- and falling -- among all states in salaries for intermediate courts



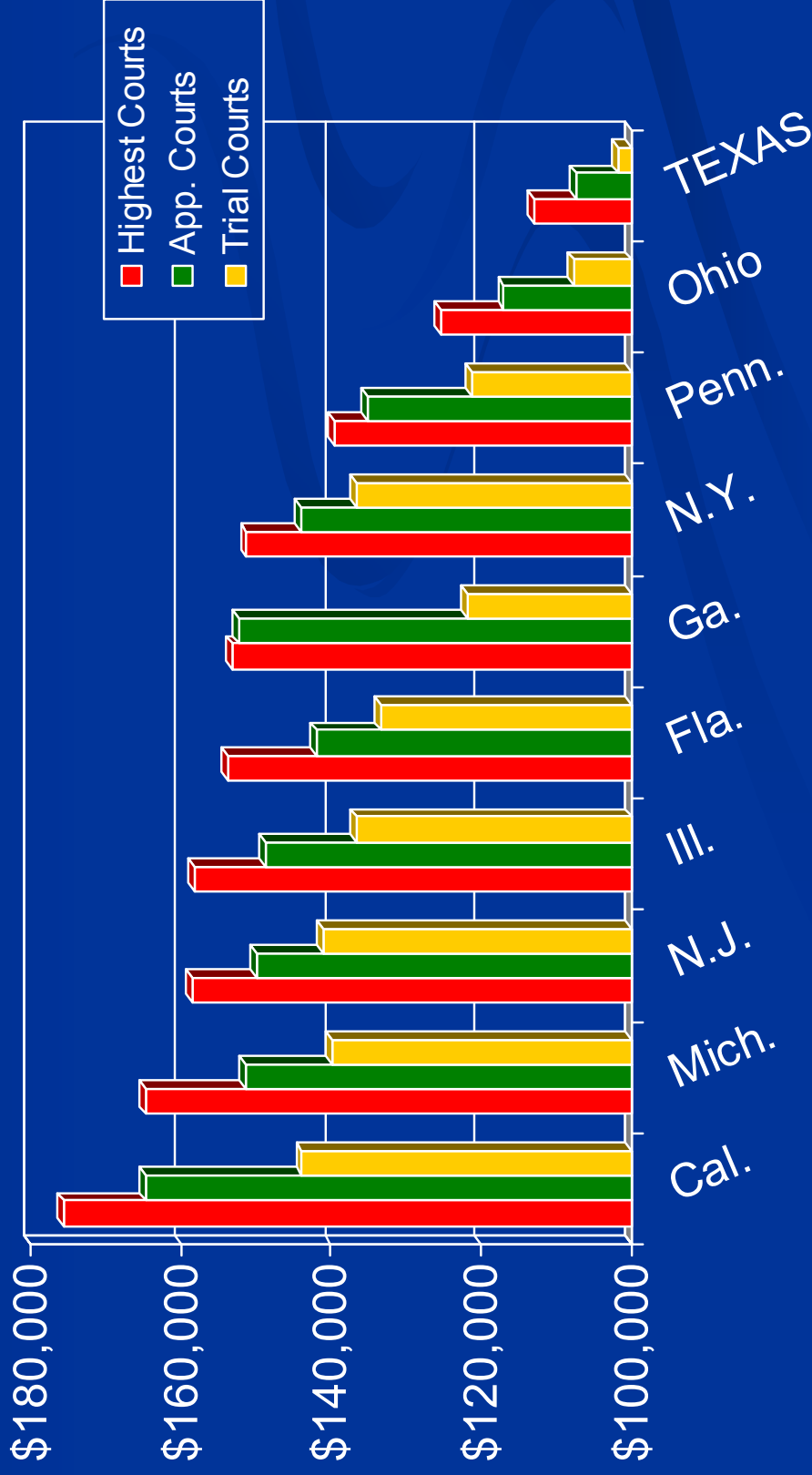
# Trial Judges Are Among Lowest Paid

- Texas District Courts salary ranks 38<sup>th</sup> -- and falling -- among all states in salaries for trial courts, without the additions of supplements



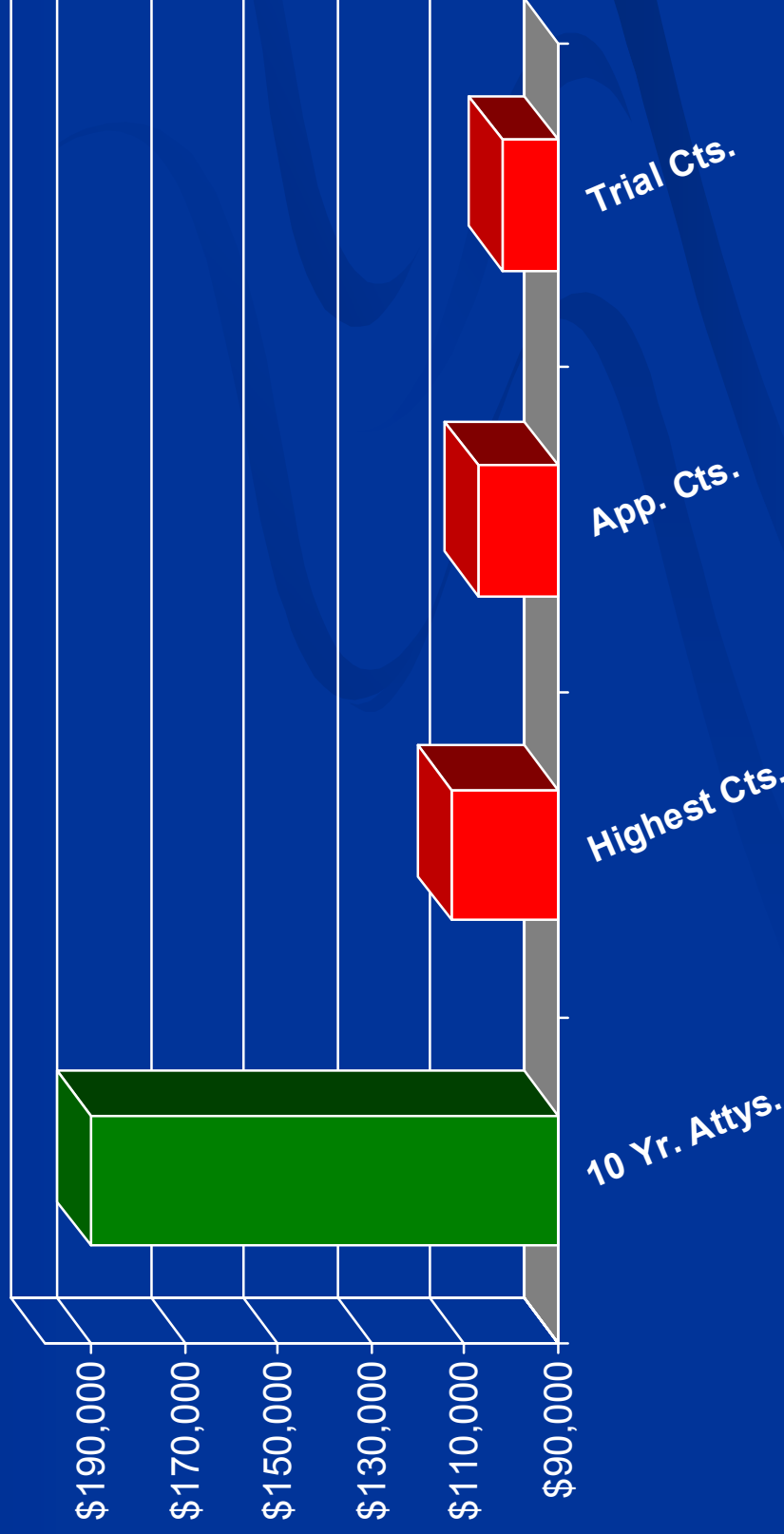
# Texas Salaries Are Last Among Ten Largest States

- Texas, the second largest state, ranks last among 10 largest states for judicial salaries at all levels



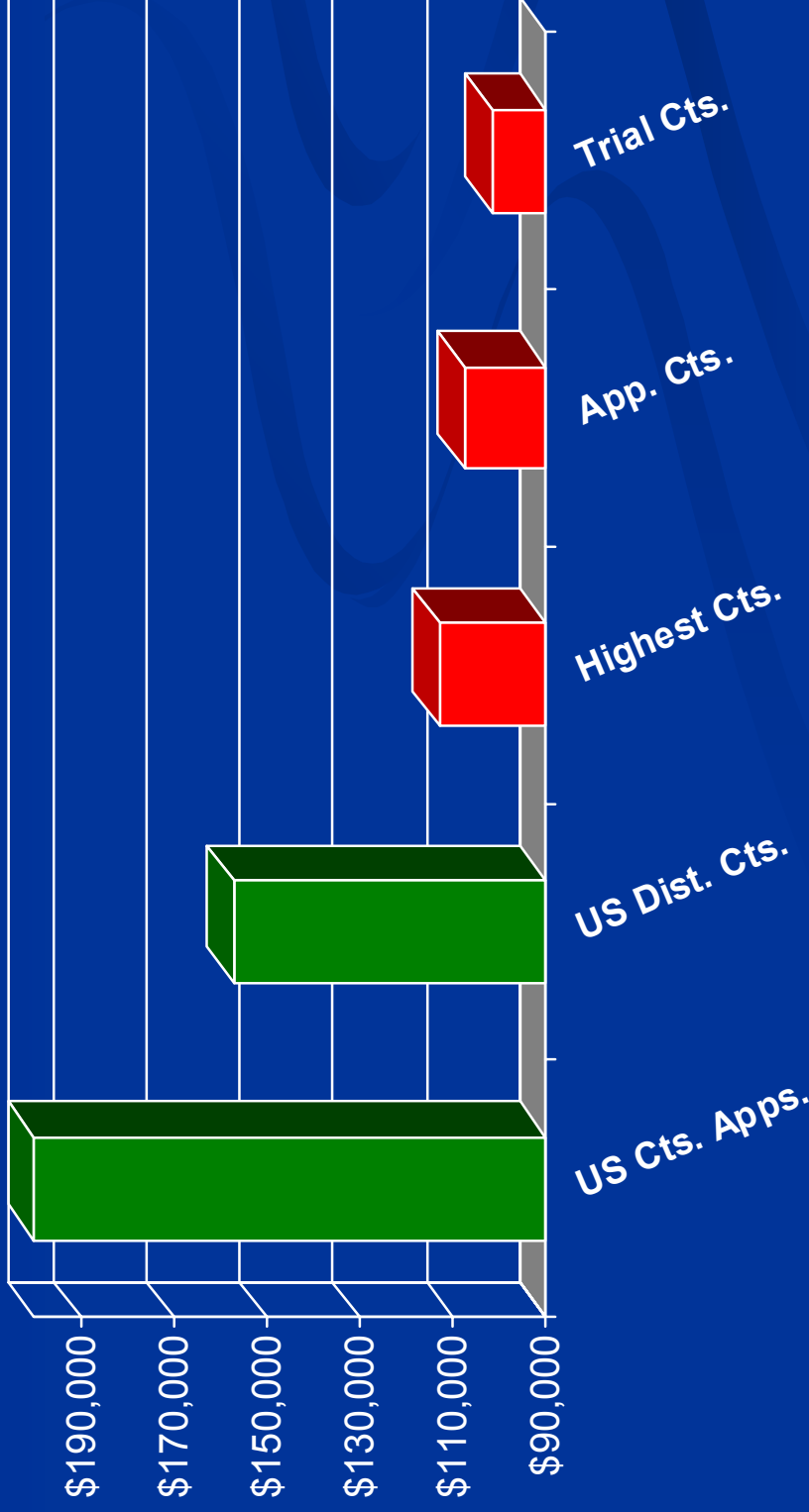
# Judicial Pay Is Dwarfed by Texas Attorney Salaries

- 10-year attorney average salary is higher than all judges – 68% above even state’s highest court judges



# Texas Salaries Are Far Behind Federal Judiciary

- Federal judges at all levels are paid far more than Texas state judges

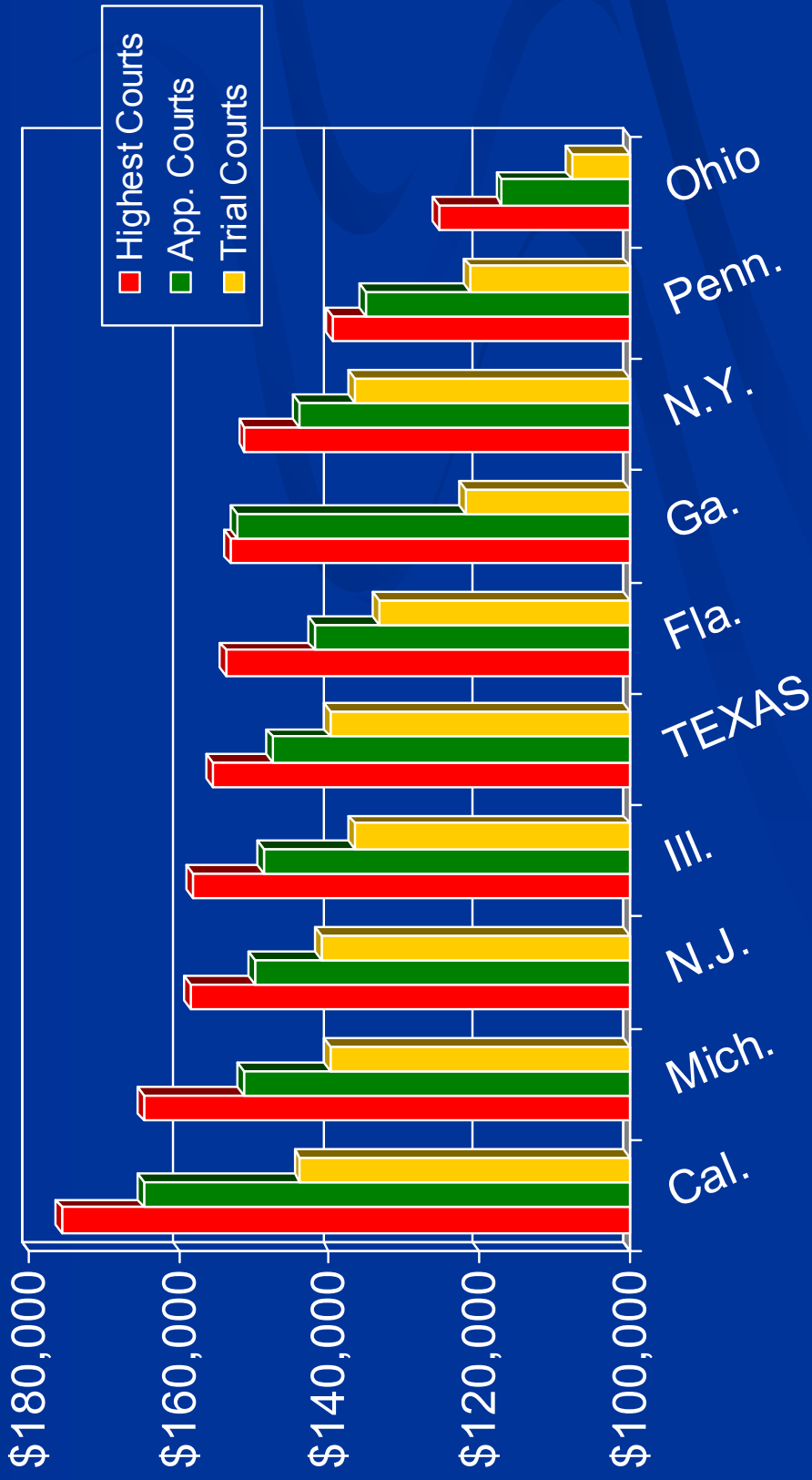


# Texas Judicial Council Recommendations

- Texas Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals: \$155,451
- Courts of Appeals: \$147,638
- District Courts: \$139,906
- Courts of Appeals Justices and District Court Judges to be paid 95 and 90 percent, respectively, of the salaries for Texas Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals
- Future pay to be based on objective criteria, such as salaries in comparable states, with automatic cost of living adjustments

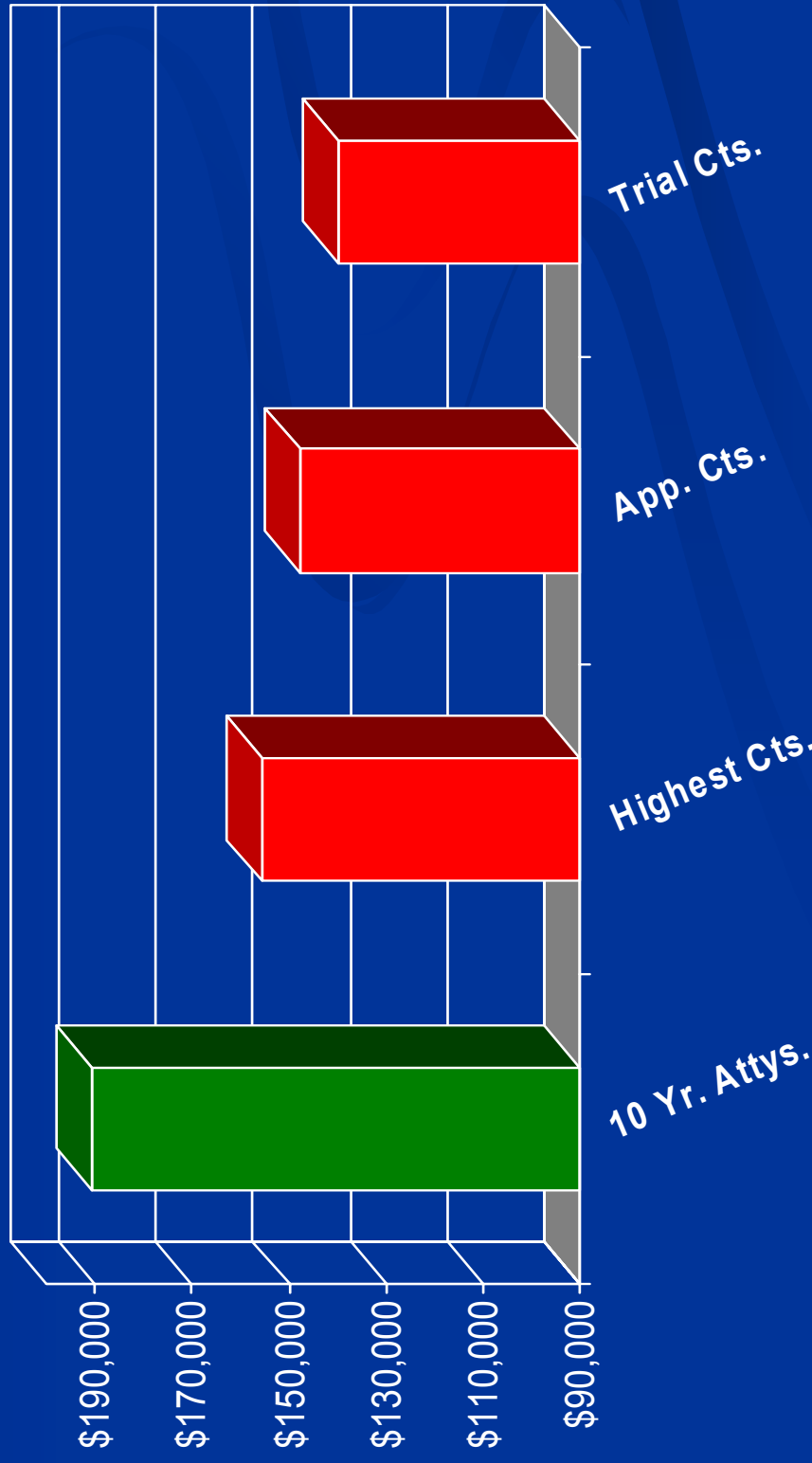
# Make Judicial Salaries More Competitive

- Recommended salaries would place Texas state judges in line with comparable states



# Move Judicial Salaries Closer to 10-Year Attorneys

- Recommended salaries would narrow gap with 10-year Texas attorney average salaries



# Recap of Recommendations

- Texas judiciary needs competitive pay, which the Judicial Council's recommendations achieve:
  - Texas Supreme Court and Court of Criminal Appeals: \$155,451
  - Courts of Appeals: \$147,638
  - District Courts: \$139,906
- Future pay should be based on objective criteria, with the 95/90 percent linkage and automatic cost of living adjustments

# Conclusions

- Texas judicial pay lags behind the rest of the country, for comparable state courts and the federal system
- Compensation reform is needed to attract the most qualified attorneys and, more important, retain them
- Proposed pay raises would create salary structure in line with states of comparable size, with periodic review
- Competitive pay would work to ensure experienced, quality judiciary for State in years to come