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Washington, DC, 20036

Hon. James Duff
Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts
One Columbus Circle, NE
Washington, DC, 20544

Hon. Gary A. Fenner
U.S. District Judge, Western District of Missouri
400 East 9th Street, Room 8452
Kansas City, MO, 64106

May 15, 2015

Dear Director Duff and Judge Fenner:

My name is Gabe Roth, and I am the executive director of a non-partisan, non-profit organization called [Fix the Court](#), which advocates for a more open and accountable U.S. Supreme Court.

I am writing today to request that the Administrative Office of the United States Courts and the Judicial Conference's Committee on Financial Disclosure consider placing Supreme Court justices' annual financial disclosure reports online, on the Administrative Office's website.

Each year, the [President](#), [Vice President](#), and members of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#) and [U.S. Senate](#) release their annual disclosures online on or around May 15, the day the reports are due [by law](#) to designated offices. Those looking to access the justices' reports are instead required to undertake an arduous process involving unnecessary obstacles that often lasts weeks or months.

Disclosure reports are essential for journalists covering the Supreme Court, in part, because of the justices' longstanding practice of not explaining why they recuse themselves in certain cases. In most instances, the only way a reporter or member of the public can figure out the reason for a justice stepping aside is to see if a disclosure report reveals any stock or asset ownership that would pose a conflict of interest. Even in such a case, anyone seeking the information is forced to make a guess.

While a number of requesting organizations scan and upload the reports once received, a more ideal situation would be for the AO to do so in a clean and uniform way. The reports would be a significant and useful addition to the newly revamped AO website.

Finally, it's important to note that we believe placing the forms online should not - and would not - compromise the privacy of the justices, as all redaction procedures should be retained.

On a personal note, as someone who grew up attending First Amendment Center events in Nashville - which, of course, is funded by the Freedom Forum - I have always supported initiatives that increase press freedom and media access. This, to me, seems to be that sort of thing.

I am hopeful that this proposal - supported by [nearly 70 percent](#) of respondents in a recent national poll - will be considered by the AO, the Committee on Financial Disclosure and other leaders in the federal judiciary's esteemed policymaking body.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gabe Roth', is written over a white background.

Gabe Roth, Fix the Court