

## Independent Ethics Commission FY 2015-16 Comeback Request

|                       | FY 2014-15<br>Adjusted<br>Appropriation | FY 2015-16<br>Budget<br>Request    | JBC Action | Comeback<br>Request                | Difference<br>Between Action<br>and Comeback<br>Request |
|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Total (all GF)</b> | <b>\$352,093</b><br><b>2.0 FTE</b>      | <b>\$450,116</b><br><b>2.0 FTE</b> | <b>\$0</b> | <b>\$450,116</b><br><b>2.0 FTE</b> | <b>\$450,116</b><br><b>2.0 FTE</b>                      |

### Summary of Initial Request:

The Independent Ethics Commission (IEC) requested \$450,116 for Commission operations in FY 2015-2016. That figure represents staffing with 2.0 FTE, and includes an increase in operating and legal services budgets.

### Committee Action:

The Committee discussed but did not take action on the budget for the Commission.

### Independent Ethics Commission Comeback:

On February 18, the Committee did not take any action on the FY 2015-16 budget request submitted by the Independent Ethics Commission (IEC). The Committee tabled this section of the Judicial Branch budget pending a comeback from the IEC. In order to facilitate the Committee's consideration of the IEC's budget request, we have prepared this comeback statement for your consideration.

The IEC asks that you adopt its FY 2015-2016 budget as submitted. The budget as submitted represents a prudent estimation of costs for continued function by the Commission.

Although the second position (Assistant) was vacant from September 2014-present, that is not an indication, at this time, that a second position is not needed. The IEC has a new Executive Director, hired in September 2014. In the first six months of the tenure of the new Executive Director, the Commission has experienced a reduced workload. It is unknown at this time what that is attributable to, and the Commission is reluctant to make the decision that a second employee may not be needed in the future, if workload increases. We therefore request that the position be funded as requested. Alternatively, if the JBC believes the position should not be funded, we ask that the Committee allocate sufficient funds to hire contract or temporary employees as needed, given that the Commission is at this time functioning with one employee and does not have coverage in the event of illness, etc.

To clarify, the Executive Director position was vacant from April 2014-September 2014. The Assistant position has been vacant since September 2014. Adding to the decision not to fill the second position currently is the fact that the Committee reallocated funds in January 2015 to meet the IEC's budget request for additional funds for legal services. Thus, while the IEC greatly appreciates the Committee's assistance in making that money available to fill other pressing needs, those funds were no longer available for personal services.

Further, to prevent the need for supplemental requests, which have recently primarily represented a need to pay increased legal services costs, the IEC requests that the Committee allocate additional funds, as represented by our budget request, to pay for those services. It is hoped that the budget as submitted will represent the amount needed for the full year of legal service costs.

The operating line item also represents an area where the IEC has fallen short in prior budget cycles. In an attempt to accommodate Commissioner travel, which has been under-budgeted in prior cycles, and to increase the functionality of the Commission by adding items like laptops, the Commission has increased its operating request in FY 2015-2016. Again, because the IEC is attempting to realistically budget its costs, we have added these items into this year's budget cycle, with a goal of meeting our needs without exceeding our budget as we have in previous years.

We therefore respectfully request that the Committee approve the increase of \$98,023 in General Fund moneys for the purpose of fully funding the Commission for the upcoming fiscal year.