

From: hurkintorres@gmail.com
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2011 10:14 PM
To: contact@judicialcompensation.ny.gov
Subject: Judicial pay riase

Dear Commissioners,

Almost a decade ago I was elected to the the New York State Supreme Court. For me it was the highest honor I could ever achieve. Public service was my idea of the greatest contribution one could make as an attorney. While I never expected to get rich, I also never expected not to receive a pay raise during my entire career. Unfortunately, my personal and professional aspirations had to take a back seat to my responsibilities as the father of a ten year old child and my family obligations.

I fully understand that, for most of the public, the current salary that judges receive seems more than sufficient. Unfortunately, the public fails to understand that the government is competing with the private sector. I was fully willing to sacrifice the compensation that I could receive in the private sector - but only up to a point. With no pay raise on the horizon, I made the decision that many other judges are making - to leave a job I loved. This was the most difficult decision I ever made.

At the end of the day, this State must decide - pay judges a salary that will keep and attract qualified judges or accept a judiciary that will decline in quality because of the failure to raise salaries. No other profession would accept a salary freeze for more than a decade.

I made my decision to leave when I was only 47 years old. I was willing to forego the significant increase in pension I would have received if I just stayed on a little longer. Why? Because I completely lost faith that the State appreciated my sacrifice in giving up the significantly greater compensation I could receive in the private sector. I did not need parity with the private sector but I did need to feel that I would receive an increase in compensation that recognized the sacrifice I was making.

I can only hope that the State makes the right decision on this issue. The quality of our judiciary is at stake.

Hon. Allen Hurkin-Torres (ret.)