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Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2011 9:30 AM
To: contact@judicialcompensation.ny.gov
Subject: Judicial salaries

New Yorkers have every right to expect and even demand that the Judges of this state observe the highest ethical standards and dispense justice fairly, impartially and in a timely manner. To meet these goals the state must attract the most qualified, motivated and public spirited individuals possible. It does not take a PhD in economics or labor relations to understand that to attract, retain and motivate such individuals costs money. The Albany Times Union in an editorial on July 19, 2011 advocates a pay raise for New York's judges that is roughly \$20,000 less than the amount necessary to index judicial salaries for 13 years of inflation since the Legislature last set judicial salaries in the waning days of 1998. The figure advanced by this newspaper will not even raise judicial salaries to the national average, adjusted for this state's high cost of living. The difference in cost between a full cost of living adjustment and this newspaper's suggested judicial salary is an amount that would run this state for about one hour. If New York wants, as many have expressed, to maintain its prominence as a commercial and banking center for the world, it must have a Judicial system worthy of the challenges such prominence requires. Some say that there are many attorneys waiting in the wings waiting to take these jobs at the current salaries. But ask yourselves " Will these bargain basement lawyers make the kind of judges that New York wants and needs?" Everyone understands the basic principle "You get what you pay for". So, why should anyone advocate for discount judicial salaries? The practice of denying cost of living adjustments to judges, while all around them are provided such raises, is inherently discriminatory and demoralizing, especially when one considers that many state and municipal employees, who make more than any judge, have been the beneficiaries of such raises. Certainly we are in tough economic times. But that does not justify or excuse the continued second class treatment of New York's judges. The newly proposed labor contracts with CSEA and PEF call for wage freezes going forward, but these contracts protect wage scales that include many years of accumulated COLA's that the judges have been denied. If the state is willing to pay wages and salaries that have been adjusted for increases in the cost of living to more than 100,000 state employees how is it then, that it can not afford to do the same thing for 1250 judges? What judges ask for is justice dispensed fairly, impartially and in a timely manner.

Respectfully submitted,

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