



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS *of New York State*

July 19, 2011

2011 Commission on Judicial Compensation
PO Box 7342
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Commission Members:

The League of Women Voters of New York State (League) submits this letter in support of Chief Administrative Judge Ann Pfau's recommendations included in the 2011 Commission on Judicial Compensation report. These recommendations include immediate implementation of a salary increase to restore judicial compensation to its level equivalent to its last adjustment in 1999. This compensation should be adjusted based on inflation, judicial salaries in other states, non-judicial staff salaries, and federal district court judicial salaries (adjusted for inflation).

The League has long supported criteria which we believe will maintain both the independence and integrity of the NYS court system. The following criteria should be used by the Commission in determining appropriate judicial compensation:

- Salary adjustments should be independent of political consideration;
- Process should be transparent and objective and easily evaluated by the public;
- Adjustments should include automatic cost of living increases based on acceptable financial indicators such as the average CPI;
- Process should promote public confidence in a well-compensated judiciary.

The League believes that a strong independent judiciary is crucial to a vibrant and effective democracy. To attract the best and the brightest in legal minds, the compensation of the judiciary must remain competitive and equitable with other court systems at the federal and state levels around the country. Adequate compensation to retain the best judges in NYS's court system is not only fair to the judges, but also insures that justice is done to the citizens who need to use the court system.

Judicial salaries in New York State have been stagnant for the last 13 years. Good public policy would dictate that action be taken now to remedy this injustice. The Commission must make its salary determination effective as of April 1, 2012.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Betsey B. Swan".

Betsey B. Swan
President