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Justice for All Women

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July 19, 2011

Dear Members of the Commission on Judicial Compensation,

InMotion urges you to enact a substantial salary increase for all of the judges and justices of the state-paid courts of the Unified Court System and Housing Judges of the Civil Court of the City of New York. The caliber and independence of the New York State judiciary is at risk without such action. For the following reasons, we urge you to bring immediately the annual compensation of our judges to at least \$220,000, as well as to adopt a cost-of-living mechanism to ensure that judges' compensation will not be eroded in subsequent years.

InMotion provides free legal services in New York City to indigent and working poor women with very limited financial resources. Most of our clients are survivors of domestic violence, many are immigrants and most are mothers who are, or who become, the head of their family's household. All are searching for a way to handle matters that directly affect their own safety and economic security and the well-being of their children.

Every day, our clients appear in the Family Courts and the Supreme Courts in all five boroughs of the city. They are seeking orders of protection, custody of their children, child and spousal support, and/or divorces. Our free legal services are designed to address the unique needs of women who are victims of domestic violence. We also reach out to immigrant women who are isolated by language and cultural barriers. One out of every six women we serve cannot access the legal system without an interpreter.

The overwhelming majority of the women who go to Family Court proceed without an attorney. With alarming frequency, these women forfeit their

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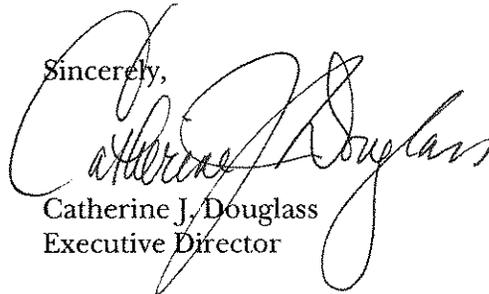
legal rights due to lack of representation, rather than on the merits of their petitions. InMotion provides trained pro bono attorneys to represent as many women as we can in divorce and family law matters in our courts. In addition, inMotion's staff attorneys and paralegals provide advice and/or brief assistance to pro se clients and referrals to women for whom we are not able to either recruit a pro bono attorney or to provide pro se assistance.

We believe it is, therefore, essential that all litigants, those with representation and those appearing pro se, encounter the best that the legal profession has to offer to decide complex and critical family issues. That means that New York must maintain a bench that is highly qualified, experienced and diverse. Judges have the unique opportunity in our society to protect the legal rights of the most vulnerable individuals. They need and deserve to be compensated in accordance with the ever-increasing demands made upon them.

New York State's preeminence among the nation's state court systems cannot help but be eroded when our judicial compensation is rapidly approaching the lowest in the nation. And the respect due to this crucial arm of our government is severely jeopardized when compensation of state court judges is considerably less than other professionals with comparable education and experience in both the public and private sectors.

On behalf of the board and staff of inMotion and all families in our state who rely upon our courts for essential protections, I urge the Commission to ensure fair and reasonable compensation for the judiciary of our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine J. Douglass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "D".

Catherine J. Douglass
Executive Director

Commission on Judicial Compensation
PO Box 7342
Albany, NY 12224

BY MAIL AND EMAIL