

## Judicial Compensation in New York State — Fact Sheet

### **A salary adjustment for NY's judges is long overdue.**

- Of the 50 states, NY now has gone the longest without a judicial pay increase.
- NY judges are in a record ninth year of a pay freeze.
- NY judges have been shortchanged for decades:
  - ▶ A judge serving since 1995, 12 years ago, has received only one pay increase (1999).
  - ▶ A judge serving since 1988, 19 years ago, has received only two pay increases (1993 and 1999).

### **The value of judicial compensation in New York State has been seriously eroded since the last salary increase. The cost of living has increased by over 26 percent since 1999.**

### **Since 1999, the salaries of Federal judges, judges in other states, and nonjudicial employees of the courts, have been increased on a regular basis to keep pace with the rising cost-of-living.**

- Since 1999, when the NY Legislature re-established the historic parity between Federal District Court judges and NY's Supreme Court justices, Federal judges have received seven annual salary increases. NY's judges and justices have received none.
- The annual salary of a Federal District Court judge is nearly \$30,000 greater than that earned by a State Supreme Court justice.
- Federal District Court judges now earn more than every NY judge, including the judges of the NYS Court of Appeals.
- Since the last salary increase, employees in both the Judiciary and the Executive Branch of state government have received salary increases aggregating 24%. For the many Judiciary and Executive employees who earn tenure-based increments, these percentages are considerably higher.

### **New York State has lost considerable ground compared to other states.**

- Historically, NY was a leader among the states regarding judicial compensation.
- Because of NY's uniquely long and severe pay freeze compared to other states:
  - ▶ Among the eight most populous states, NY ranks last in a cost-of-living adjusted ranking (behind California, Florida, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas).
  - ▶ NY ranks 38<sup>th</sup> nationwide when salaries are adjusted for state-wide cost-of-living. In reality, many NY judges rank even lower than that because most judgeships are based in metropolitan areas where the costs of living are even higher.
- Since NY's judges last received a pay increase, trial judges in the other 49 states have received pay increases averaging 3.2% a year, for a cumulative increase of more than 24%.

**A growing number of states have adopted mechanisms — e.g., automatic cost-of-living adjustments, review commissions, linkage to adjustments accorded other groups —to ensure that judicial compensation is reviewed regularly.**