

**NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION
submitted in accordance with Assembly Rule III, Sec 1(f)**

BILL NUMBER: A10615

SPONSOR: Weinstein|(MS)|||||

TITLE OF BILL:

An act to amend the family court act, in relation to judges of the family court

This measure is being introduced at the request of the Chief Judge of the State.

This measure would amend the Family Court Act to establish 39 new Family Court judgeships, as follows:

* In New York City, seven new judgeships, effective January 1, 2009: and another seven new judgeships, effective January 1, 2010,

* Outside New York City, one new judgeship in each of the following nineteen counties, effective January 1, 2009 (with each judgeship first being filled at the November 2008 general election): Albany, Broome, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Columbia, Nassau, Niagara, Oneida, Oswego, Rensselaer, Rockland, Saratoga, Schenectady, St. Lawrence, Tioga, Ulster, Warren and Westchester.

* Outside New York City, two new judgeships in each of the following three counties, effective January 1, 2009 (with each judgeship first being filled at the November 2008 general election): Erie, Monroe and Suffolk.

While the past several decades have seen increasing legislative recognition of the needs of children and families in New York, in the form of landmark statutes promoting child permanency and enhancing family justice, these salutary efforts have not been matched by provision for a corps of Family Court judgeships sufficiently large to meet the greater caseloads and complexity of proceedings in our courts today. The consequences of this neglect, if not attended to soon, will be disturbing, indeed heartbreaking - and utterly unacceptable: justice delayed for children and families whose safety and welfare can require immediate intervention, children growing up in foster care instead of permanent homes, children graduating from Family Court to Criminal Court instead of high school and college, missed opportunities and spiraling inefficiency for juvenile justice and legal defense agencies.

This measure will go a long way toward redressing this unintended and lamentable condition. If enacted, it would represent the first major infusion of new Family Court Judges in New York in over three decades and begin to provide the State's family justice system with the resources needed to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.

This measure would take effect immediately.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

None. New proposal.

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