



The Chief Judge of the State of New York

Judith S. Kaye

April 29, 2008

The Honorable David A. Paterson
Governor of New York
Executive Chamber
The Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

I write in response to your letter of April 24, 2008, asking the Judiciary to limit spending in light of the State's fiscal condition.

We are fully committed to working with our partners in government to address the State's fiscal situation. In formulating the Judiciary budget request, we were aware of projections of a decline in State revenues and therefore sought only the resources necessary to support core court operations and to enable the courts to fulfill their constitutional mandate in the face of an ever-growing workload. Indeed, the year-to-year increase in the Judiciary budget (exclusive of funds for a judicial salary increase) was significantly less than the 4 percent rate of inflation, and significantly less than the 4-1/2 percent increase in the State budget that was adopted. In addition, we are implementing fiscal controls to ensure that we prudently manage the public resources that have been entrusted to us.

We are, however, not able at this time to identify savings of a specific amount or percentage. As you know, the issue of judicial compensation remains unsolved. Until that issue, and any potential impact on our budget, is addressed, it is premature to commit to any particular reductions.

Finally, I noted your reference earlier this week to an alleged judicial "slowdown" to protest the salary crisis, and assure you that the allegation is without basis. Despite a decade-long judicial salary freeze, and a steady increase in our workload through that period, the New York State Judiciary continues, first and foremost, to discharge its responsibility to the public. While some Judges have individually chosen to recuse themselves from matters in which legislators or their firms appeared before them, there has not been -- nor will there be -- an adverse impact on litigants.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith S. Kaye", written in a cursive style.