



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION
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DECEMBER 2, 2013: STATEMENT FROM NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT DAVID M. SCHRAVER ON PROPOSED 2014-15 JUDICIARY BUDGET

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New York State Bar Association President David M. Schraver of Rochester (Nixon Peabody) today issued the following statement on Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman's proposed 2014-15 Judiciary budget.

"The New York State Bar Association strongly endorses the proposed budget submitted by Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. It continues to promote efficiency and fiscal restraint in the court system, while also addressing the important needs of the Family Courts and those citizens most in need of legal services.

"Among the important budget items is an additional \$15 million for civil legal services. The State Bar Association has long supported increased funding of civil legal services to address the civil legal needs of low-income New Yorkers, and it is one of our legislative priorities for 2014.

"The Bar Association applauds the chief judge for including funding for 20 new judges for the Family Courts. As the chief judge rightly points out, the demand for Family Court services has far outpaced the growth in the number of judges needed to handle the increased caseload. Increasing the number of Family Court judges is another of the State Bar's legislative priorities for 2014 and was a key recommendation of a report issued in November 2012 by the Bar Association's Task Force on Family Court.

"The Bar Association also strongly supports the inclusion of \$17 million in additional funding for statutorily mandated indigent criminal defense standards. Our House of Delegates in 2005 called for maintaining high standards for mandated representation of indigent criminal defendants. We support the chief judge's call for expansion of electronic filing as a means of saving money and making the courts more efficient. And for the first time in several years, the courts have restored funding to provide grants for lawyer assistance services across the state, another State Bar Association priority.

"After five years of relatively flat budgets, in which the courts have made tremendous strides in cutting costs and reducing inefficiencies, the Judiciary is requesting a modest 2.5 percent increase in funding in 2014-15 to address the growing legal needs of New York's citizens. The relatively small increase will compel the court system to continue to find ways to reduce costs and increase efficiency, while also beginning to address a growing list of needs.

"The New York State Bar Association urges the Legislature to address the pressing needs outlined in the chief judge's message and approve the Judiciary's proposed budget in its present form."

The New York State Bar Association, with 76,000 members, is the largest voluntary state bar association in the country. It was founded in 1876.

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