

READERS' COMMENTS

# Commission Raises N.Y. Judges' Pay 27% Over 3 Years

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By WILLIAM GLABERSON

The increases were less than what some had hoped for the more than 1,200 state judges after 12 years without a raise, but also come at a difficult time politically.

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26. Chloe NY August 26th, 2011 3:25 pm

At a time when there is a huge glut of lawyers in America with tens of thousands of lawyers unemployed, the salaries of lawyers and judges keep going up. The law of supply and demand clearly does not apply to the legal industry. I guess this is not surprising since our legislatures and committees are full of lawyers.

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27. Chloe NY August 26th, 2011 3:25 pm

#12: "12 yrs without a raise! The only place where that ever happened was in the old Soviet Union or Cuba, Its about time the judges got a raise !"

Oh please... most middle class Americans haven't had a raise in 12 years when you take into account the recession. 12 years wasn't that long ago, it was at the peak of the tech bubble. Family does have seen their incomes drop precipitously in the last decade with many closing their doors. Somehow I don't imagine you cheering for physician salary increases.

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28. Carl Steefel Berkeley, CA August 26th, 2011 3:25 pm

Unbelievable how many people will begrudge somebody a raise after 12 years of not getting one...

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29. nov02 NY August 26th, 2011 3:25 pm

Yes Sarah we read they went 12 whole years w/o a raise for their 100g+ part time jobs ..odd if they felt sooo underpaid they didn't go get a job in the private sector.

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30. Charlies36 Upstate NY August 26th, 2011 3:25 pm

This is kind of hard to swallow. Judges seem to be fairly well paid without the raise. M/C employees have had promised raises and other benefits canceled several years in a row. CSEA just approved a contract with furloughs, and increased health insurance costs (percentage). PEF is about to vote on a very similar contract. Finally, the governor is looking to increase the percentage paid by the retirees for their health insurance.

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31. TheAccused Black Plains, NY August 26th, 2011 3:26 pm

Some judges make a lot more than the income that the State pays them. I remember knowing a few judges in West Chester County in NY that share a % of the criminal loot by the likes of Cali Cartel

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32. Joe Buffalo

The salary would be warranted if Supreme Court Justices were merit

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August 26th, 2011  
3:30 pm

selected and not appointed. They are for the most part qualified, but there are of course exceptions, and in general they don't work all that hard and the benefits are excellent. Most attorneys make far, far less than these salaries-yes, there are exceptions, but the average attorney in upstate earns a modest middle class income. If Justices all worked harder and politics were removed to the greatest extent possible from what is essentially a party-appointment process, I'd feel better about these raises, but for now I say: "don't like the pay? Learn how to practice, again or for the first time".

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33. jeff  
nyc  
August 26th, 2011  
3:35 pm

They should be stripped of their pensions and their health care. 27% more pay sounds like they make enough money now to pay for the benefits that us in the private sector can only dream of.

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34. S. Dennis  
Asheville, NC  
August 26th, 2011  
4:20 pm

One must wonder exactly what the NY judges are doing other than using a rubber stamp to dismiss cases as I've heard them doing from so many lawyers. So, for not reading cases and analyzing them and pushing them off their plate, they're getting our money without doing the actual work. Sounds like the American justice system in its glory. All the unemployed should get the same raise for the same reason.

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35. Jerry Vandesic  
Boston  
August 26th, 2011  
5:05 pm

For the mathematically challenged, this works out to 1.61% per year, over 15 years (12 years since the last increase plus increases for the next three years). That's probably about break even with inflation. To be honest, I am amazed that we don't see more turnover, when a senior judge can increase his salary by a factor of 10 by moving to a big firm.

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36. NYGUY  
NY  
August 26th, 2011  
5:10 pm

The comments here are so scary it's almost funny. You can't compare a judge's salary to the salary of a first year lawyer. First year lawyers are not eligible to be judges and, even if they were, we really wouldn't want someone with no experience making the decisions that judges make. A posting as a judge is a position an attorney gets at the height of their career earning-power. So their alternative salary would be what an attorney is making at the height of their career. This type of public service exacts a considerable financial toll on a judge when compared with what they would make in private practice. It is a sacrifice, and we should have some respect for them for taking it. We will never attract good people to the bench by paying them nothing and deriding them as nothing but lazy civil servants.

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37. DrCatalyst  
New York City  
August 26th, 2011  
6:25 pm

At this point in time, I don't think the issue is whether the judges deserve the pay raise. The point is deciding the best thing to do with this money, and if it could be used to save some jobs, that should be the preferred use of those funds. Giving raises right now sends another confirmation that those who have will only get more while the rest fall right into the abyss. Concomitantly, only this week letters went out from EPIC to many senior citizens in New York who have been getting help with their prescriptions. Unbelievable but EPIC will no longer help with Rx expenses of poor seniors until they reach the donut hole. That means poor people would have to spend about \$3,000 before getting help with medications. Since I doubt many can afford to spend that much on their medication, I see diverting some of that money into making EPIC operative once more a way of literally saving lives.

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38. steverr  
Pleasantville, NY  
August 26th, 2011  
6:55 pm

This is a joke. To give NYS Supreme court judges the same amount as federal judges, who actually work, is a farce. They are the laziest group of people there are. Go any afternoon to the court and you are lucky to find any judge on the bench. Don't believe they are in their chambers working.

Look at their parking lot, they're gone.

The other joke is to think they are the brightest lights out there. They are nothing but a bunch of political hacks, if they could make more money, they would have left. They're there because nobody wants them, because they don't want to work hard in private practice. There is always someone else to take their place, there is no shortage of candidates even at their "low" salary of \$136K.

So some politician says the "poor" judges are only getting a 27% raise, are we supposed to feel sorry for them? Anybody want to take up a collection?

So much for the state being out of money. They fire the people who actually do the work, and raise the judges salary. Justice? I think not.

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39. [globalist1](#)  
Winona, MN  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
This was much needed although I doubt it will stem the flight toward private practice.  
Recommend Recommended by 2 Readers
40. [Old Mister](#)  
Mountain View CA  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
Why do the wealthiest demand and expect and get the most? All government salaries should be capped.  
Recommend Recommended by 6 Readers
41. [Bruce Egert](#)  
New Jersey  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
Finally. But still not enough for what the public asks these hard working men and women in robes to do.  
Recommend Recommended by 1 Reader
42. [JS](#)  
Miami, FL  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
Funny that there is always never a shortage of money inorder to be pay the folks sitting at the top. Be it the banks, wallstreet, politicians... The rest of the middle tier and the ones at the bottom are usually left with hours worth of lectures on austerity and patriotism! We have always been a nation of Socialism for the rich and capitalism for the rest. And somehow we have the nerve to lecture the chinese or the world in general!  
Recommend Recommended by 8 Readers
43. [Sandy Lewis](#)  
Lewis Family Farm,  
Essex, New York  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
This is a joke - that will force the able from the bench - and attract jerks who can do no better elsewhere.  
The most able get the least. Like teachers in brain surgery.  
Recommend Recommended by 3 Readers
44. [Oxifblue](#)  
New York, NY  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
Long overdue.  
And @Joe (comment 7)... they haven't gotten a raise since 1999. So it's really 27% over 15 years... not even 2% a year. They're getting a raise that more or less keeps up with inflation.  
Recommend Recommended by 2 Readers
45. [David](#)  
Los Angeles  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
Way over paid. What a bunch of greedy people.  
Recommend Recommended by 6 Readers
46. [R Doherty](#)  
Waitsfield, VT  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
It's so difficult to scrape by on "only" \$136,000 per year- my heart bleeds for these poor underpaid judges! As a former NYer, I am glad I no longer live in NY and help pay their salary.  
Recommend Recommended by 7 Readers
47. [CjmEsq](#)  
Bronx, NY  
August 26th, 2011  
7:50 pm  
I agree with my colleague, #1. I've been a member of the NYS Bar for over 25 years. Most, but not all, of the State Supreme Court justices are political hacks, not worth a red cent.

Hopefully, with the raise, a better quality of judge will emerge. But I doubt it.

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48. PRESIDENT MERV  
New York City  
August 26th, 2011  
8:00 pm
- The vitriol toward the judiciary expressed in many of the comments is very instructive. Let's face it--judges are very unpopular, and in these hard economic times, who really is in favor of a raise for any government worker unless you are that worker. I fear that ultimately judges will take this all out on the people who have cases before them. How can we expect judges to work hard and be fair if there is no financial incentive to do so?

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49. MC  
NYC  
August 26th, 2011  
8:25 pm
- As someone who is not a lawyer and has not been before the court, all I can say is this: when you underpay the adjudicator of justice, you get bad justice. I believe judges are grossly underpaid today, and the incentive for intelligent attorneys on either the prosecution or defense side of the bar end up gravitating to the private sector because of the incentives.

We need to make it more attractive for top attorneys to want to be judges. If that means making the raise 54%, so be it. If we want to quibble with the fundamentals, then we should not complain when justice is meager.

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50. spayne  
Atlanta  
August 26th, 2011  
10:15 pm
- As a chemistry teacher with 12 years experience, a PhD in chemistry, and several teaching awards, I am making less this year (\$40,000 per year) than I made my first year of teaching. Apparently, the only workers today who have to make sacrifices are the teachers, police, and fire department people.

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