

CLICK HERE
For The Latest
Sales & Events
At The Mall!

Judges' pay

State sending wrong message

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2011

New York state pays its judges so poorly that several are leaving the bench, a New York Times report points out.

ARTICLE OPTIONS

AAA SHARE

They are not retiring, but returning to private law practice where they can make 10 times their judge's salary.

Although this is a nationwide trend, New York is, unfortunately, one of the leaders. About one in 10 judges are stepping down from the bench each year to seek greener pastures, the Times reported.

There is no mystery in this exodus. New York judges have not had a raise for 12 years — not even a cost of living increase.

State Supreme Court justices receive an annual salary of \$136,700 these days. The state's chief judge earns \$156,000.

Compare that to the salary they could command as attorneys. One judge who recently stepped down from the intermediate state appeals court in Manhattan joined a law firm where the average pay for a partner is \$1.4 million.

The state cannot hope to match that, nor should it try. But it can do better than the salaries being paid our top jurists.

This should have been taken care of years ago, but the state Legislature neglected to do so. Now, amid lean economic times and a quest to control state spending, there is little push to increase judges' pay.

And yet, it should be done. Once upon a time, in the 1970s, New York's judges were the best paid in the nation. Now, their salaries, when measured by the cost of living, are 46th in the nation.

That is the wrong message for the state to send to its talented jurists. Hopefully, the commission on judicial studies created last fall can rectify the gap by recommending appropriate compensation.

[HIDE COMMENTS \(8\)](#)

Over already?



...I was just getting comfortable!

Experience the new

3T

MAGNETOM Verio

MRI

- now available at



(315) 769-4228

You may use this copy for your personal, non-commercial use only. Redistribution or repurposing without express written permission of the Watertown Daily Times is strictly prohibited. Copyright. Watertown Daily Times, Inc., Watertown, NY. All rights reserved.

8 comments posted. ([Refresh](#))

By MDMPH *Wed., Jul. 06 at 3:10 pm*

Lifetime employment and pension/health care after???? are so many lawyers running for judgeships?????The WDT is really wrong on this editorial. the state needs to avoid guaranteed raises. That is what drove NYS off the financial cliff.

.the salary PLUS benefits need to be competitive..and the current situation definitely is.

By Rutland Hollow Rd. *Wed., Jul. 06 at 2:13 pm*

Admittedly, 12 years is too long without at least a COL adjustment.

However, let us not forget that until April our State was prepared to spend \$23,000,000 to renovate a former Catholic school into luxury apartments for Appellate Court justices. If not for all of the hue and cry over the 2011-2012 State Budget, this extravagance would have slipped below the radar.

So, there is more involved in this argument than just salary.

By theeditor *Wed., Jul. 06 at 12:40 pm*

COMMENT

You must be logged in to post.

[LOG IN](#) | [REGISTER](#) | [FORGOT PASSWORD](#)