

Judiciary

Pay Freezes Prompt More Judges to Leave Bench, Go Back to Practice

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By [Molly McDonough](#)

The number of judges leaving the bench because of a growing pay gap is increasing nationwide, but especially in New York, where nearly 1 in 10 judges are leaving each year to go into private practice.

In New York, judges haven't had a pay raise in 10 years, ever widening the gap between those on the bench and those in private practice, where partner pay can be 10 times annual judicial salaries, the [New York Times](#) reports.

The Times notes that at least a dozen judges have resigned for pay reasons, the most recent being state appeals court judge James M. McGuire, who left his \$144,000 annual salary for a partnership at Dechert, where average partner pay is \$1.4 million. The 57-year-old has two young children.

"I tormented myself for the longest period of time about whether I should go, because I love the work," he tells the paper. "And then I realized, 'I've got no choice. The only responsible thing for my family is to go.'"

In the 1970s, New York judges were paid the highest in the nation. But the National Center for State Courts now ranks the state 46th, the Times notes.

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