



READERS' COMMENTS

Pay Frozen, More New York Judges Leave Bench [Back to Article](#)

By WILLIAM GLABERSON

The state's judges, who have not had a raise in 12 years, are resigning in relatively large numbers, not to retire but to return to practicing law.

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214 Readers' Comments

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151. **wwd**  
Kansas  
July 5th, 2011  
12:50 pm

It will be this way for many public sector jobs. Who will teach, judge or police, when the negatives outweigh the benefits? Soon we will be hearing about shortages across the board. And the public will wonder why corporation x is not picking up the trash or fixing potholes. Don't be silly--the idea is to bilk the taxpayer. Service? Bah!

Recommend Recommended by 2 Readers

152. HIGHLIGHT (What's this?)

**Amy**  
Ohio  
July 5th, 2011  
12:51 pm

No pay raises during a recession is reasonable - but no pay raises for 12 years? That means NY State is paying it's judges the same salary they received in 1999-- and that's absurd. Prices have increased 30% since then. Social security COLAs have averaged 2.5%. Even minimum wage has gone up in that period -- from \$5.15 to \$7.25. It's no wonder there's a brain drain from the NY courts.

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0774473.html>  
<http://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/colaseries.html>

Recommend Recommended by 32 Readers

153. **Andy Hain**  
Carmel, CA  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

It's a lot cheaper to simply ask your Uncle Joe what he thinks, rather than pay for the services of educated professionals. Yeah, that's the ticket!

Recommend Recommended by 1 Reader

154. **C**  
New York  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

We don't have merit selection of judges in New York. Until we get merit selection, there's no reason to pay judges as though they merit top-dollar.

Recommend Recommended by 7 Readers

155. **Walter G**  
Seattle  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

Let me see, in order fix the plague of corrupt and incompetent judges we should, drum roll please, give them a raise? Is that how it works? Seems to me I have bee doing my job all wrong this whole time. In order to get a raise

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in these here times we now live, I should just judge-up my job and act like a complete jerk to co-workers and costumers. That's how it works. It all makes sense now.

Recommend Recommended by 2 Readers

156. Vlad  
Wallachia  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

Absolutely shocking. These privileged boys work a short week, have fantastic perks, largely a "job for life", then whine because they "only" make 7x the median wages in the nation. Then there are the "sniff..sniff...that's not much in NYC" crowd. Well then that points out your govt does not work. Why is it so expensive? Taxes and bureaucracy.

This is a story about greed. Nothing else. "I deserve, I should have, I demand" are the mantras of the day. While bad in the public sector, it is far more egregious coming from....wait for it....WAIT FOR IT....a public "servant". I am tired of people lining their pockets at my expense, living large yet crying poor, all the while telling you they are deserving of praise for their "public service". I don't see the service, quite frankly. I see a lot of dead weight making big money. I am happy to come up to NYC for \$150k + job for life + 40hr week + perks and sit as judge. You'd get real justice and no whining. Although it is quite likely some people are going to end up on stakes...but that's "entertainment" in the big apple!

Recommend Recommended by 6 Readers

157. CBL  
NY  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

A Judge is not a lawyer. Lawyers all in practices with many law firms and independent, but the JUDGE can no longer be a lawye A lawyer becomes a JUDGE by choice. Any person who's lifestyle is in the millions will not be able to abide a scant sum or \$ 140,000 a year. I believed that the people who became JUDGE in any capacity were doing it with community service in mind. Giving back in knowledge, fairness and honesty what they have made in dollars through the years.

Should I take a job paying "X" amount of dollars a year I would do so feeling it was adequit for my needs, If I intended to build a new house or buy into a business I would not give up my million dallar practice until thes things were settled and I was ready to retire from the "rat race". I'm glad that Judge Goodman quit. She could not survive on \$144,000 a year and no raises. Does she feel bad about the unemployed,the people who are losing their homes , the ones they used to live in, not a new purchase in the "Hamptons".

It is my opinion that our public officials make too much money.Jobs that are considered public service should not be lucretive and sought after with personal gain in mind.Our President,The Supreme Court Justices,the Congress right on down to your federal and couty judges, are all overpaid.The reason Ben Franklin was against paying a wage more than a stipend to our Congress was to eliminate GREED and competition for office with any reason other than you wanted to serve your country.

There are crooked judges and fair ,unbiased ones as well, but they all recieve more money than they need to get by on. Some scholars of law that never went before the BAR are good judge material too. Any raise that a Judge would get would be a prearranged contract with the people and he would be subject to scrutiny and proved worthy of the raise by it's criteria. Our we getting our money's worth in the legal field of judges? I suspect not,but we can alter this by popular pressure only.

Recommend Recommended by 1 Reader

158. Bill  
New York  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

What kind of benefits and pensions do they get?? I bet it's a lot better than the overwhelming majority of us.

Recommend Recommended by 8 Readers

159. freddy  
florida  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

I'm quitting my fancy private sector job to go teach social sciences in high school. I have come to the conclusion that if things are to change, the change must begin in the hearts and minds of the future leaders of this country. It seems those in power now, aren't willing or able to do a damn thing about it; so I will. If the few good people out there don't stop to really see and try to change the money-driven, corrupt and unequal system we are being subjected to, then who will?

Recommend Recommended by 5 Readers

160. Ronald Cohen  
Wilmington, North  
Carolina  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

As an attorney in good standing in the State of New York I would welcome appointment to the state-court bench at the present salary level. Just give me a call. I'm registered with the Office of Court Administration.

Recommend Recommended by 7 Readers

161. Viad  
Wallachia  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

Please allow me to add that most of you don't have a lick of sense, nor understanding of history. Since when does throwing money at someone make them better at their jobs? Look at the top 5% of American big biz then tell me all about it (head of gm kept cranking out gas guzzlers with gas at \$5/gallon and no sign of it coming down, while being paid MILLIONS a year....yeah, he's a real genius). As for history, how much, in today's dollars, was Washington paid to fight the Brits or to be President? One day after Independence Day and you can't concentrate. Pathetic. Great men are great, no matter their pay. The rest are insolent boys who do not deserve respect nor riches.

Recommend Recommended by 2 Readers

162. Beth Phillips  
Brooklyn, NY  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

My divorce began in 2005 as my husband filed for divorce, after I had survived stage 2 breast cancer. I had heard that judges were disappointed with their salary and their protest was to move caseloads more slowly as a form of protest.

Wel, 7 years later we are not divorced. No fault divorce has finally past in New York so hopefully the 2 judges will come to a decision - there is one judge for the children and one judge for the assets.

There are other costs to consider when the judges do a work slow down. All the people needed to run a court house, security, the file clerks, legal assistants, the court reporters and my favorite the calendar clerks who logs the next court date.

This 7 years of litigation and over 80 court dates is an example of unnecessary government waste and that our marital assets went to pay lawyers who benefit from these ineffective court judges on the bench.

Please note: Judges decide to run for election in Brooklyn for 10 year terms. They have light schedules, medical coverage and pensions for life. The key phrase is that they run for election and make a choice for this position. When judges protest by "a work slow down on the bench". It comes at the taxpayer's expense and many small families in divorce court.

Recommend Recommended by 6 Readers

163.

Jim  
Whidbey Island,  
WA  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

I bet qualified replacements will be quickly found. I'm amazed the minute financial problems of affluent public officials are headlined in the NYT.

Recommend Recommended by 3 Readers

164. John  
Phoenix  
July 5th, 2011  
12:52 pm

So much for our noble "public servants". But with lawyers it is all about greed.

Recommend Recommended by 3 Readers

165. HIGHLIGHT (What's this?)

I am an administrative law judge. My salary started at 75% of the actual pay rate. After seven years on the job, I will earn about \$95,000. Perhaps some political appointees don't work terribly hard. I would doubt that anyone without inside expertise as to the operations of the court system would truly know how hard judges work, particularly when in chambers. However, my colleagues and I routinely post 10 hour days. Many administrative law judges for NYC earn less than \$40 per hour, with no benefits whatsoever.

Recommend Recommended by 10 Readers

166. DJS  
New York  
July 5th, 2011  
12:53 pm

To The Editors, Regarding Highlighted Comment #23, and to Beatrice:

Editors: There is a factual error in Beatrice's Comment #23 which you chose as a Highlight. Regents Scholarships are strictly MERIT BASED And Beatrice's father could have had a 10 million dollar a year salary and she still would have qualified if she had met the academic criteria. I know this as I was a recipient of a Regents Scholarshi as were a number of my friends, and we all had the good fortune to grow up in an affluent area. My father's income would have disqualified me from being a Regents Scholarship Award Winner, and I NEVER would have lied on an application. The Regents Scholarship, incidentally, was all of \$250 a year, not that I am complaining. My tuition at Queens College was only \$250 a semester !! Like Beatrice's father, my late father, though he was not a Judge, as well as my mother held the highest moral and ethical standards in all of their affairs and raised their five children accordingly. I believe that the five of us have carried those values well into our adulthood (we are in our 40s and 50s now), but it does make it hard to fit in with the rest of the world, at times. Once again, I wish the New York Times Editors would be familiar with the facts. Surely one of you has a teenager who would know the criteria for qualifying for a Regents Scholarship?

By the way, My Uncle, who IS a judge, has said jokingly, that if one is going to risk landing in jail, one should commit a substantial crime that is worth the risk; perhaps a \$50,000 tuition scholarship would be "worth the risk" to some, but the Regents Scholarship was all of \$250 a year !!

Recommend Recommended by 4 Readers

167. AdoptedMainer  
Portland, Maine  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

The best and the brightest don't necessarily work at the white shoe law firms. Many work at public interest jobs that pay much less than what judges make now. Query whether a judge who complains about having to give up her house in the Hamptons is capable of understanding the lives of most of those who come before her. Perhaps the answer is to look for judges from public service backgrounds.

Recommend Recommended by 7 Readers

168. HIGHLIGHT (What's this?)

pio  
nyc  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

It's not about whether \$144,000 is per se not enough to live on or whether you should feel "sorry" for someone making \$144K. The point is that if you want good judges, you have to pay them salaries that at least make the job appetizing compared to the other things they could be doing with their law degree. I completely agree that teachers are underpaid, but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't pay judges more. And I also note that teachers don't have as many private sector options as judges do (although they have some, they can go work at a private school, for example, or become private tutors), so there is not the same competition for talent.

Recommend Recommended by 18 Readers

169. thewryl  
CT  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

Perhaps the issue is not that Judges are paid too little but rather Lawyers are paid too much!!

Recommend Recommended by 6 Readers

170. norguesa  
Massachusetts  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

Perhaps I'm instinctively suspicious, but it's worth considering when these judges new contracts are hammered out. It's likely happening while they're still on the bench, which makes one wonder if any of their cases involve parties from their future employers/partners. Could there be an ethics issue here worth some scrutiny?

Moreover, this is an excellent argument for a two-track law school system. In the same way as having politicians going to work for the firms that previously lobbied them, jumping back and forth between lawyer and judge to me seems of dubious ethics. Why can't students choose a (cheaper) alternative in law school that sets them down the path to judgeship, and the ones who want to pay the hefty price tag go on to be lawyers?

Recommend Recommended by 0 Readers

171. Mitch H  
New York City  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

It must be nice to be in a situation where you are "forced" to sell a property in the Hamptons just to "make ends meet". LOL.

Recommend Recommended by 7 Readers

172. Bill  
San Francisco  
July 5th, 2011  
1:00 pm

We all have an interest in ensuring that Judges are well paid to attract the best and brightest. Otherwise, with the quality of Judges going down, so will our quality of Justice.

Recommend Recommended by 0 Readers

173. A.M. Garrett  
Lafayette, La.  
July 5th, 2011  
1:10 pm

Everyone's scrambling to get while the getting's good. Might as well. In a few years, there will be no more good to get. An the bankers, lawyers, insurance company execs need to realize that they are killing the goose that laid their golden egg. Once America's middle class is destroyed, there will be no more pockets to pick. Seriously, it is hard to imagine in a few years that these people won't be looking back in regret that they left a secure \$144K-a-year job.

Recommend Recommended by 4 Readers

174. Kay  
New York, NY  
July 5th, 2011  
1:20 pm

We're all too focused on money.

It's true that giving judges a higher salary will attract more talent and retain

the better judges, but why should we have to resort to monetary incentives to get the best people to serve the public?

Judges serve an essential role in society and should be paid what they deserve. However, that should not be viewed in terms of money. They are paid with respect and honor and the knowledge that they are serving their community and protecting the rights of individuals. That should be enough for judges. They should be provided with a salary that allows them to sustain themselves. 144K is more than enough to do so.

There should be a shift in our perspective so that money is our main focus.

[Recommend](#) Recommended by 1 Reader

[175](#) Lady Macbeth  
NY  
July 5th, 2011  
1:21 pm

Cost of living wage increase?? What is that? I work in the private sector, lucky if I get a 1-2% increase in salary. If they don't liek the current state of their collective employment why don't they join severl thousand others and look for work elsewhere? My eyes are getting all misty just thinking that the judge had to sell her home in the hamptons.....NOT!

Since they have so much to offer the general public why not serve them where there expertise might come in handy? Say in the private sector where you're responsible for your own healthcare, and retirement. No tears to be shed for them.

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