

Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

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Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 4:14 AM
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Subject: Is the Judiciary Budget a "Slush Fund"? -- NY's Sham Budget Process & the Hoax of its New Transparency

Citizen Challenge to Judiciary Budget Exposes the Sham of NY's Budget Process & the Hoax of its New Transparency

What is the precise dollar cost of the Judiciary budget being approved by Albany legislators?

According to the Senate's "White Book" of its Finance Committee's Majority Coalition (at p. 75), the total is \$2,662,000,000. According to the Senate's "Blue Book" of its Finance Committee's Democratic Minority (at p. 232), it is \$2,660,128,900. The difference is \$1,871,000 between them.

What about the Assembly? The "Yellow Book" of its Ways and Means Committee (at p. 73-1), controlled by Majority Democrats, gives a far different total: \$1,973,235,869. The "Green Book" of the Ways and Means Minority Republicans gives no figure at all.

Who's right? Chief Administrative Judge Gail Prudenti, testifying in support of the Judiciary's budget at the Legislature's February 6th budget hearing on "public protection" wasn't asked – and didn't say. She gave no dollar amount for the Judiciary's budget – and, tellingly, its total cost was not set forth in the Judiciary's budget documents, whose two parts add up to \$2,630,896,476. Nor was a total cost identified by the "single budget bill" that the Judiciary passed on to the Governor – and which the Governor passed on to the Legislature with the "Comment" that it was "\$2.6 billion" – a rounded figure that can conceal many tens of millions of dollars.

Is the Judiciary budget a "slush fund"? That's what the Center for Judicial Accountability (CJA) has called it in a March 11th letter sent to all members of the Senate and Assembly General Conference Committee and all members of its Joint Budget Subcommittee on "Public Protection", Criminal Justice, and the Judiciary. The letter, which suggests (at p. 10) that the untallied total cost of the Judiciary appropriations bill might be \$2,683,991,476 or more, summarizes and expands upon CJA's testimony at the February 6th budget hearing, calling upon the Legislature to reject the Judiciary budget as unconstitutional for lack of appropriate itemization, including its omission of the dollar cost of the judicial pay raises it contains, also nowhere identified in the appropriations bill.

The March 11th letter and the video of CJA's 10-minute testimony at the Legislature's February 6th budget hearing are posted on CJA's website, www.judgewatch.org, on a webpage entitled "Securing Legislative Oversight & Override of...the

judicial pay raises", accessible *via* the top panel "Latest News". Here's the direct link: <http://www.judgewatch.org/web-pages/judicial-compensation/legislative-oversight-judicial-raises.htm>.

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