



NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION

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**Testimony of Henry M. Greenberg, President
New York State Bar Association**

**Hearing of the
NYS Commission on Legislative, Judicial and
Executive Compensation
November 14, 2019; Albany, NY**

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I am Henry M. Greenberg, President of the New York State Bar Association. On behalf of NYSBA, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

An independent and properly funded judiciary is important not only to our judges and their families, but also to the New York State Bar Association, every attorney, the people of our great state, and, ultimately, to the stability of our democratic society.

Judicial compensation reflects the value that we, as a society, place upon the critical work that our judges perform. We all appreciate and benefit from the important role of the judiciary in our society, and the failure to adequately compensate judges devalues their work in a way that we believe is detrimental to a properly functioning justice system.

That is why the New York State Bar Association has in the past recommended a substantial increase in judicial salaries and regular cost-of-living adjustments for judges. NYSBA reiterates its long-standing position on the importance of adequate judicial salaries and recommends implementation of appropriate increases for New York's judges at this time. In particular, we support linking the level of compensation for New York's justices of the Supreme Court with the salary of federal district court judges.

NYSBA represents the interests of over 70,000 members -- lawyers in New York State, across the country and around the world. For more than two decades, NYSBA has been a strong and steadfast supporter of appropriate judicial compensation. Throughout that time, our position has been firm and clear -- an independent, well-functioning judiciary, accessible to all, is a cornerstone of our democracy society. Moreover, we strongly believe that the operation of our justice system depends upon confidence -- on the part of both lawyers and their clients -- that the judge presiding over a case is qualified, independent, and focused on the matter at hand.

In 2010, NYSBA strongly supported the bill mandating the establishment of periodic judicial compensation commissions because regular review of judicial salaries plays a critical role in maintaining our system of justice. We also urged past compensation commissions to provide adequate increases in judicial pay.

Based on NYSBA's long-standing policy on this important issue, today we urge that the level of compensation for New York's justices of the Supreme Court continue to be the same as the salary of federal district court judges.

I am honored to be here today to share NYSBA's support for increased judicial compensation and the continuing importance of the work of these judicial compensation commissions.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.