

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW YORK STATE SUPPORTS  
CHIEF JUDGE JUDITH KAYE'S JUDICIAL PAY RAISES**

The League of Women Voters of New York State (LWVNYS) today stood with Chief Judge Judith Kaye as she renewed her call for Governor Spitzer and legislative leaders to reform New York's broken system for compensating judges and other constitutional officers.

Barbara Bartoletti, LWVNYS Legislative Director, said: "Governor Spitzer and the Legislature's failure to raise judicial salaries in the 2007 budget process was a travesty. They know our courts are in crisis because New York judges are among the lowest paid in the nation. No state can continue to attract and retain the most qualified lawyers for judicial service with salaries lower than inexperienced lawyers can earn. And yet for the third year in a row, State leaders are holding judicial pay hostage to squabbles having nothing to do with the courts. Forcing judges to beg on bended knee shows brazen disregard for our courts and undermines the independence of our Judiciary – a pillar of democracy that State leaders are sworn to protect. Their continued inaction is an disgrace."

For a record ninth year, New York judges haven't received a cost-of-living adjustment, while all other judges in America received at least one and sometimes many increases to keep pace with economic reality. In 20 years, New York judges received only two raises while inflation further eroded their pay – a burden no other professionals are asked to accept. The reason for this two-decade assault on the Judiciary is that judges get or don't get raises on the whim of the Governor and Legislature, who are addicted to using the judicial pay issue to exact concessions in unrelated policy debates.

Chief Judge Kaye proposed and the League of Women Voters endorsed an overhaul of New York's salary system for all three branches of government. Modeled on forward-thinking practices nationwide, Chief Judge Kaye's reforms would shift salary decisions to nonpartisan three-branch commissions based on objective criteria such as cost of living, state revenue and market conditions. The result would be a process that is transparent, predictable and fair, insulating salary decisions from politics and thus better protecting judicial independence.

The 2007 budget proves just how right Chief Judge Kaye is to reform the broken salary process. Courts are in crisis, and there's no time left for excuses or finger-pointing. If Governor Spitzer and the Legislature care about courts and the rule of law, they must immediately raise judges' pay and embrace Judge Kaye's reforms.

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