

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE DELAWARE JUDICIARY RESPONDS TO FY 2010 BUDGET PAY CUTS FOR STATE EMPLOYEES

Although the Delaware State Constitution precludes the reduction of the salaries of judges, commissioners and justices of peace while in office through a budget pay cut, members of the Delaware Judiciary demonstrated their commitment to “sharing in the sacrifice” mandated by the FY 2010 pay cuts for State of Delaware employees. In support of State employees, particularly those employees who work closely with them every day, 100% of the judges, commissioners, and justices of the peace, have volunteered to take a similar 2.5% reduction in pay in fiscal year 2010, either through a voluntary reduction in their pay or contributions to charitable organizations. Many of the charitable contributions made by judges and others in response to the pay cut focus on organizations that provide services to Delawareans accessing the courts, such as Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., which receives State funding that has been significantly reduced in FY 2010.

Chief Justice Myron T. Steele said: “From the beginning of the budget discussions, I personally committed to sharing in any sacrifice that State employees would be asked to make. My colleagues in the Judiciary have made their individual choices to respond to the FY 2010 pay cuts, demonstrating our collective commitment to helping Delaware through this difficult fiscal crisis and to standing ‘side by side’ with those who work with us on a daily basis.”

He also stated: “Although the Judicial Branch functions as an independent branch of government, we have worked closely with the other branches of government to help address the fiscal challenges which the State is facing. Despite the fact that the Judicial Branch’s budget represents only 2.7% of the overall State budget, we have gone ‘above and beyond’ to do our part – we were the first to implement a hiring freeze for non-essential personnel, and have been making painful cuts to our budgets and working with the other branches of government to enhance state revenues, throughout this fiscal crisis. By implementing this approach, the Judicial Branch’s efforts have made millions of additional dollars available to help balance the State budget. Through the hiring freeze alone in FY 2009, the Judicial Branch saved more than \$2 million in personnel funding. We have made budget cuts bringing the impact on the core public services we provide to the ‘breaking point.’ I commend the members of the Delaware Judiciary, for their further demonstration of that ‘public spirit,’ by voluntarily reducing their pay, or the benefits they receive from that pay, ensuring that they share in the same sacrifice as those with whom they work.”

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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