



NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, *Corporation Counsel*

Press Release

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*For Immediate Release*

**CORPORATION COUNSEL MICHAEL A. CARDOZO TO TESTIFY  
BEFORE SPECIAL COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL COMPENSATION TODAY;  
WILL URGE SALARY INCREASES FOR NEW YORK STATE JUDGES TO AVOID  
AN ONGOING GOVERNMENTAL “CRISIS”**

***WARNS COMPETITIVE SALARIES ARE NECESSARY TO CONTINUE  
ATTRACTING AND RETAINING THE MOST HIGHLY QUALIFIED JUDGES***

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Albany, July 20, 2011 – In testimony anticipated for early this afternoon, New York City Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo will appear before the Special Commission on Judicial Compensation in Albany and strongly urge that New York State judges should receive a salary increase to avoid an ongoing governmental “crisis.”

Chapter 567 of the Laws of New York of 2010 established a special commission on compensation to examine the adequacy of judicial compensation and the need for adjustment. This is the Commission's first public hearing on the issue, and it's expected to include testimony from current and former judges as well as representatives of various judicial, bar and civic organizations from across the state.

The Corporation Counsel will testify that the judiciary in the State of New York is in crisis as a result of New York State's failure to compensate judges properly. This failure to grant judges even a cost of living adjustment since 1999 has eroded judicial pay in New York State, thereby making it more difficult to recruit judges and attract candidates from a broad cross-section of the legal community. Even attorneys in senior positions in public sector law offices – such as the New York City Law Department, the District Attorney's Offices and the Legal Aid Society – would have to accept significant pay cuts in order to serve as judges. This simple fact deprives New York of many highly-qualified potential candidates for judicial positions.

Specifically, Corporation Counsel Cardozo is expected to testify that “on behalf of Mayor Bloomberg, I am here today to tell you that the judiciary in the State of New York is in crisis and as a result, the very structure of government of this State is in crisis as well. A strong and independent judiciary is essential to the proper functioning of government. New York's failure to compensate judges properly is weakening the judiciary and therefore weakening our entire government. This *must* be corrected. Now.”

Cardozo will give as an example of this sacrifice the hypothetical case of a lawyer in the Corporation Counsel's Office who had risen to the position of Division Chief. In order for that person to accept a position as a Criminal Court Judge, he or she would have accept a 20-percent pay cut. Such a large financial sacrifice is not something most people can afford to make, particularly not in difficult economic times.

In order to ensure the best and the brightest attorneys continue to serve as judges, the Corporation Counsel will testify that salaries must be increased so that judges receive fair and just compensation. Otherwise, Cardozo will warn that rather than have a judiciary comprised of individuals from all parts of the legal profession and representing diverse ethnic, religious and gender backgrounds, we will be left

with a judiciary comprised of “those who because of marriage or birthright, or because they have already had financial success in their professional lives, can afford to work as judges at low pay.”

On behalf of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Cardozo will call on the Commission to avoid further erosion of the judiciary, to embrace the opportunity it has been given to address the issue of judicial compensation and to make it immediately clear to judges that within a short and specified time period they will be properly compensated.

Reporters, editors and members of the public seeking full copies of the Corporation Counsel’s remarks can contact the Law Department’s Press Office at [media@law.nyc.gov](mailto:media@law.nyc.gov) or (212) 788-0400. Alternatively, the comments will be available on the office’s web site later in the day at [nyc.gov/law](http://nyc.gov/law). Go to the “In the News” section and look under “Public Addresses/Speeches.”

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