

NEW YORK CITY LAW DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE CORPORATION COUNSEL

Michael A. Cardozo, *Corporation Counsel*

Press Release

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*For Immediate Release*

**IN “LAW DAY” ADDRESS,  
CORPORATION COUNSEL MICHAEL A. CARDOZO CHAMPIONS  
MAYOR’S COMMITMENT TO JUDICIAL PAY RAISES  
AND RELATED REFORMS**

***SAYS ALBANY’S FAILURE TO MOVE IS A “FRONTAL ASSAULT...ON THE RULE OF LAW”  
AND CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE RAISES AND AN IMPROVED JUDICIAL SELECTION PROCESS***

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New York, May 1, 2007 – In an important Law Day address today at the New York County Supreme Court, New York City Corporation Counsel Michael A. Cardozo championed the Mayor’s longstanding commitment to “the rule of law” and an “independent judiciary” by calling for judicial pay raises as well as other critical reforms, including an improved judicial selection process.

The Corporation Counsel, while addressing dozens of judges and other dignitaries, noted: “Your [judicial] salaries should not be held hostage to differences between the Legislature and the Governor over legislative salaries and campaign finance reform. You have a right to a substantial salary increase – and you deserve that increase now.”

Cardozo continued, “The Mayor and I firmly believe that we must maintain a highly qualified and independent judiciary to uphold the rule of law in this city, this state and this nation.” He referenced the City’s deep disappointment over the lack of serious movement on the issue of judicial salary raises. “Albany’s failure to enact judicial pay increases is an absolute disgrace; it is a frontal attack on the rights of every citizen in this state because, to put it bluntly, it is an assault on the rule of law and the independence of judges who administer that law.”

On behalf of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, the Corporation Counsel called on Albany to act quickly. “The game that Albany is playing with your salaries in order to achieve other political goals is one of Russian roulette ... this lethal game must stop. Albany must enact your pay raise now.”

Cardozo also focused on other judicial reforms embraced by the Mayor. These include changing the way State Supreme Court justices are selected – most immediately, by legislation that will improve the present judicial convention system and, ultimately, by a merit selection constitutional amendment. “I hope we can come up with a nominating system for State Supreme Court justices that is far superior to the existing one – which, as many of you know all too well, couldn’t be worse,” he noted. In previous addresses, Cardozo has ridiculed the “backroom deals” that allow incompetent political appointments to taint the judiciary.

The Corporation Counsel highlighted recent positive judicial reform proposals touted by Gov. Spitzer. “Encouragingly, last week Gov. Spitzer also proposed a series of judicial reforms, including restructuring the judicial selection process to effect merit selection, as well as streamlining the court system through trial merger.” He cited the City’s desire to forge ahead with all the key players. “We will be working with

the Governor, the Legislature and [New York State Court of Appeals] Chief Judge [Judith] Kaye to have these long-needed and critical measures enacted ....”

Cardozo concluded by highlighting the judges’ important contributions to the public good: “Respect for the rule of law is the foundation of American society,” he noted. “And all of you are the guardians of that critical foundation.”

Those seeking copies of the Corporation Counsel’s speech can find it on the Law Department’s web site (address below). Go to the “In the News” section and look under “Public Addresses/Speeches.”

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