

COMMENTARY OF THE GOVERNOR ON THE JUDICIARY

In accordance with Article VII, Section One of the State Constitution, I am transmitting herewith the appropriations requested by the Judiciary for fiscal year 2005-06. As required by the Constitution, I am presenting the Judiciary budget as it has been submitted by the Office of Court Administration.

The Judiciary's All Funds appropriation request is \$2.1 billion, a \$126 million, or 6.5 percent increase over the current year, as adjusted for the impact of the 2004-05 pay bill. Of this amount, nearly \$1.9 billion is requested from the State tax dollar supported General Fund, reflecting an increase of \$108 million or 6.2 percent over 2004-05.

The requested General Fund increase includes:

- \$44.7 million for negotiated salary increments for State staff;
- \$52 million for increased fringe benefit costs;
- \$4.5 million for contracts and other fixed cost increases, including legal reference and the Law Guardian Program;
- \$12.5 million for annualization of current year initiatives, primarily for security enhancements; and
- \$12.3 million for new or expanded activities, including security equipment, continued expansion of Drug Treatment Courts and night court in New York City and for the Court Appointed Special Advocates Program.

These increases are partially offset by recurring savings totaling \$18 million resulting in a net General Fund increase of \$108 million. The All Funds appropriation growth reflects an additional \$16.4 million for the Court Facilities Incentive Aid Fund.