



For Immediate Release
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**MODERN COURTS FILES *AMICUS* BRIEF IN SUPPORT OF JUDICIAL
SALARY INCREASES IN *KAYE v. SILVER***

New York, NY... Victor A. Kovner, the Chair of the Fund for Modern Courts, announced that Modern Courts filed an *amicus* brief in support of the plaintiffs in *Kaye v. Silver*, a law suit brought by Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye, in her official capacity as Chief Judge of the State of New York and the NYS Unified Court System, to compel the Legislature and the Governor to increase judicial compensation.

The Fund for Modern Courts is the first non-party to submit an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) in this historic law suit.

Mr. Kovner thanked Modern Courts' Board member, Caitlin Halligan, the former Solicitor General of the State of New York and now a partner at Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP, and her associates, Gregory Silbert and David Yolcut, at her firm for preparing the brief on behalf of Modern Courts.

Mr. Kovner said that, "Modern Courts has a vital stake in the outcome of this litigation, because of its long-held belief that inadequate judicial compensation undermines the very concept of an independent, highly-qualified and diverse judiciary. Insufficient compensation discourages our most committed judges from remaining on the bench and dissuades our most talented lawyers from applying to become judges. The relief sought by Plaintiffs will undoubtedly help ensure that New York's judiciary will enjoy the independence and respect it deserves."

Mr. Kovner noted that both the judiciary and the public are ill-served by the failure to adjust judicial compensation even to keep pace with inflation. New York's current stretch of judicial salary stagnation is the longest in the nation, and as a result, the pay

provided to New York's judges now ranks 49th nationally, once adjusted for the state's high cost of living.

In recent years, Modern Courts has supported not only an increase in judicial pay, but also the Chief Judge's call for a quadrennial commission that would be charged with adjusting judicial salaries on a regular basis. Mr. Kovner said, "This proposal offers the best prospect for achieving the desired ends of equity, regularity, objectivity and nonpolitical treatment for judicial compensation." He noted that this proposal, which has garnered the support of New York's governmental leaders, has fallen victim to the same linkage of irrelevant political issues that has doomed the pay increases themselves.

Founded in 1955, Modern Courts is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, statewide organization dedicated to improving the courts in New York State through advocacy, public education and in-court programming.

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