

THE COMMISSION'S BUDGET

In our 1988 Annual Report, we reported extensively on the Commission's annual budget, including an analysis of its growth over the ten preceding years and a detailed comparative examination of the budgets of New York's and other states' judicial conduct commissions. In view of the current budget crisis being experienced by the state government, it seems appropriate to comment on the Commission's most recent budget and the sacrifices we, like other state agencies, are undertaking.

In 1978-79, the first year of operations under the present system, the Commission's budget was \$1.644 million. Twelve years later, the 1990-91 budget is \$2.262 million; and, due to the current state budget crisis, the amount that the Commission was permitted to spend was \$2.051 million, representing an annual budget growth of less than 2%. That percentage is substantially below inflation rates and dramatically lower than growth rates of other government agencies. Five times since 1979, we requested budgets no greater or even less than the previous year's amount, and we were apprised by the Division of the Budget that ours was the only agency to seek less than before.

The herculean task of maintaining a markedly low-growth budget over 13 years has left virtually no bureaucratic "fat" to be trimmed from our budget. The cuts that state agencies are expected to endure will hit hard, and among those agencies which have demonstrated austerity in pre-crisis times, the cuts will hit even harder. We have been compelled to lay off some staff and to cut back in other ways.

The Executive Budget seeks the sum of \$1.960 million for our operations in fiscal year 1991-92, commencing April 1, 1991. Although this substantial reduction will adversely affect our operations, we will carry out our assigned responsibilities to the best of our ability.

CONCLUSION

Public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary is essential to the rule of law. The members of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct believe the Commission contributes to that ideal and to the fair and proper administration of justice.

Respectfully submitted,

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