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## Panel Votes To Raise Pay For State Judges

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By Ailsa Chang



Statue outside courthouse

A state panel charged with setting new salaries for New York state judges has decided to raise their pay by 27 percent over the next three years.

State supreme court judges will start making \$160,000 in 2012. Their salaries will jump to \$167,000 in 2013, and then to \$174,000 in 2014, which would bring state supreme court judicial pay in parity with federal judicial salaries.

The current salary for state supreme court judges is \$136,700.

Former City Comptroller Bill Thompson chaired the seven-member commission that approved the salary raises. During the panel's final meeting Friday, he said he wished he could have raised state supreme court salaries to at least \$190,000, but fiscal

realities precluded that.

"The truth right now is, there are many who are predicting a double-dip recession, so that, in fact, this country and this state and city may decline again," said Thompson.

Business advocate Kathy Wylde served on the commission and voted against the proposal because she said a three-year phase-in is too slow. Wylde said she would have liked to have seen state supreme court judges getting paid \$174,000 sooner than 2014.

"This is not about just dollars and cents. This is also about the symbolism to a judiciary that, at least many that I've talked and that we've heard from in the public hearing have felt demeaned, have felt disrespected," Wylde said.

The seven-member commission's proposal has the force of law unless overturned by the state legislature.

The commission was created under a bill passed last year to resolve the long-running controversy about judicial pay.

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