

## Memorandum in Support of Adequately Funding the Commission on Judicial Conduct

NYSBA #9

February 1, 2019

S.7500

By: BUDGET

A.9500

By: BUDGET

Senate Committee: Finance

Assembly Committee: Ways and Means

### **THE NEW YORK STATE BAR ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

The Commission on Judicial Conduct has as its mission the responsibility for investigating complaints of misconduct against judges and, where appropriate, disciplining judges for ethics violations. After eight years of working with relatively flat budgets the Commission is under-resourced and understaffed.

As a result, the Commission's current staffing level is at 38 staff members, which is down from 50 staff members in recent years.

The Commission's funding has not kept pace with its record caseload. Office rent has increased more than \$400,000 since 2010. Its budget, however, has increased only \$290,000. The result of this relatively flat funding has been to prolong the time it takes to discipline the guilty and exonerate the innocent.

The Commission's work is critical to ensuring the public's trust and confidence in our judiciary. Accordingly, we urge the Legislature to provide proper funding for the Commission, so that it may vigorously pursue its mandate, and provide the public with reason to trust in the integrity of our judicial system.

We have many excellent and hard-working judges in New York State. Regrettably, as in every field of human endeavor, there are a few who do not meet the necessary standards. The Commission is the body charged with enforcing rules of judicial conduct, and it must be adequately funded to perform this necessary work.