



MICHIGAN COURTS NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Judiciary Supports Governor's Budget, Plans to Increase Efficiency, Improve Service

LANSING, MI, February 25, 2015 – In testimony today before House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees, Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert P. Young, Jr. said that the state judiciary would accept its fair share of cuts. If the Governor's recommended budget is approved, Young explained general fund support for state courts would drop by \$3.8 million.

In his remarks, the Chief Justice detailed plans to continue measuring judicial performance, tracking public satisfaction, adopting best practices, streamlining court processes, and implementing technologies that expand public access, increase efficiency, and boost productivity of trial courts. He also noted a recent statewide survey of 21,000 people having business in Michigan's courts showed high rates of satisfaction with the timeliness of service, the friendliness with which it was offered, and the fairness of the outcomes.

"Our goal is for Michigan's judiciary to be a national model of efficiency and service to the public," said Young. "Justice must be timely; our courts must be accessible and accountable, costing no more than absolutely necessary."

"The Michigan Supreme Court has taken the lead in reforming court operations to show that we are the best possible stewards of public resources," Young continued. "As a result, we are continually measuring performance, quantifying outcomes and documenting benefits to the public."

Chief Justice Young highlighted the successful outcomes of Michigan's 164 "problem-solving" courts. The Governor's budget recommendation includes support for these specialized courts that divert carefully screened offenders into treatment programs, avoiding costly jail and prison time. For example, graduates of sobriety and mental health courts are three times less likely to reoffend within two years, while drug court participants are two times less likely to reoffend.

"I urge you to attend a graduation ceremony at one of these courts, especially the veterans treatment courts," said Young, noting that Michigan leads the nation with 20 of these courts. "You will hear powerful stories about how graduates lives were saved because these courts and the dedicated judges who lead them gave the participants direction and a second chance."

Young also highlighted efforts to cut spending and increase efficiency. In particular, he focused on reductions in the number of judges to fit the state's caseload. When this plan is complete, 40 judgeships will be eliminated and cumulative savings to taxpayers will be more than \$175 million. Courts statewide are also adopting plans to streamline operations, share resources, and increase collaboration.

Finally, the Chief Justice thanked the Legislature for its ongoing support of the MiCOURT case management system. Implementation of this state-of-the-art application developed by the Supreme Court will help more than 200 local trial courts increase efficiency and improve service to the public by replacing a decades-old system that is far beyond its operational life with a user-friendly application critical to the ongoing operation of Michigan's trial courts.

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