



STATE OF VERMONT
SENATE CHAMBER

MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Paul Reiber, Chief Justice, Vermont Supreme Court
From: Senator Richard Sears, Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Jane Kirchel, Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Date: February 3, 2015
Subject: Judiciary Budget

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Reiber", written over the "To:" line of the memorandum.

We recognize that the Judiciary, like the Legislature, is a separate branch of government and has an extremely difficult job balancing fiscal resources against its mission that has as its key elements: the provision of equal access to justice, protection of individual rights, and the resolution of legal disputes fairly and in a timely manner.

We commend the Judiciary for its willingness to work with us to address the fiscal challenges that we have faced over the years.

As you know we again face a serious fiscal challenge in the upcoming FY 2016 budget. With the revenue downgrade we are facing a total shortfall for FY 2016 of \$112 million in the General Fund. This represents an 8% shortfall from the resources needed to fund current services.

The Governor's fiscal year 2016 budget includes a savings target of \$500,000 for Judicial operations. The budget also envisioned potential reductions in FY 2016 pay act funding and other personnel savings which could create additional pressures on the Judiciary budget and the criminal justice system generally. The Governor further proposed language in the Budget Adjustment bill for a plan to produce such savings to be submitted by prior to March 31, 2015.

As was the case in the House, we have chosen not to include any specific language in the Budget Adjustment bill regarding FY 2016 reduction. We do ask that you work with the two Appropriations Committees and the two Judiciary Committees to offer alternatives which can assist in meeting the budget challenges before us.

We appreciate your continued service and partnership as we move forward in this budget development process.

cc: House Committee on Appropriations
House Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Jim Reardon, Commissioner, Department of Finance and Management
Stephen Klein, Legislative Fiscal Officer, Joint Fiscal Office
Andrew Pallito, Commissioner, Department of Corrections
Matthew Valerio, Defender General
David Cahill, Executive Director, Office of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs
Robert Paolini, Executive Director, Vermont Bar Association