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November 6, 2020

Hon. Janet DiFiore
Chief Judge of the State of New York
New York State Unified Court System
25 Beaver Street
New York, NY 10004

Hon. Lawrence K. Marks
Chief Administrative Judge
New York State Unified Court System
25 Beaver Street
New York, NY 10004

Re: Opposition to the elimination of Judicial certification program

Dear Chief Judge DiFiore & Chief Administrative Judge Marks:

The Jewish Lawyers Guild is disappointed by the decision to deny certification/recertification to 46 Justices of the Supreme Court, including members of the Appellate Division and Appellate Term. While we understand the economic realities of budget constraints, it is our opinion that these Judges can still make essential contributions in the Court system especially now given the health crisis that we find ourselves in.

It is our belief that the decision to deny certification will have significant repercussions for the public who rely upon our Court system for prompt resolution of disputes affecting their lives and livelihoods. Cases at the trial level, already languishing because of the pandemic, will grow even more stale while the cases are reassigned to new Justices who are unfamiliar with them and who already have full caseloads. It also means that our justice system will lose many court attorneys and clerks, who will also find themselves out of work at the end of the year. Such a decision means that our already overworked and back logged system will devolve into further uncertainty.

We ask respectfully that you reassess and rescind your decision to deny certification to these 46 Justices. It is concerning to target jurists who are over seventy. Due to their age and years of experience both on and off the bench these jurists have the wisdom and perspective that is always critical but is even more important in these challenging times we all face.



We ask that you defer implementation of your decision, allowing these justices who have devoted so many years to serving the public, to remain on the bench for at least one more term. This would allow them to continue to serve the public, provide them additional time to get their personal affairs in order and leave the Court system in a dignified manner. We too, believe that these Judges deserve the respect they have shown to so many lawyers and litigants throughout their judicial careers.

Respectfully submitted,


Michael F. Kremins
President

cc: Hon. Justice Rolando T. Acosta
Hon. Justice Alan D. Scheinkman
Hon. Justice Elizabeth A. Garry
Hon. Justice Gerard J. Whalen