

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CHIEF JUSTICE ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR
PROBATION SERVICES GRANTED BY GOVERNOR**

Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald announced Friday that Gov. Pat Quinn has restored \$20 million to the Supreme Court's current budget to help fund probation services throughout the state.

The governor responded to an appeal by the Chief Justice for the second year in a row to add funds for probationary services to remain a viable component of public safety.

For Fiscal Year 2011, the legislature appropriated \$36.4 million to the Supreme Court for grants and awards, including probation services. That is the same amount it appropriated last year, and less than half of what had been appropriated for probation services in 2002. Last year, the governor restored \$16 million after an appeal by Chief Justice Fitzgerald and conversations between the governor's office and the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, headed by Director Cynthia Y. Cobbs.

In a letter to the governor last month asking to increase funds under the governor's statutory budget authority, the Chief Justice noted that even with the additional funds last year 90 probation officer jobs throughout the state were eliminated because of a shortfall of funding.

"I am compelled to once again write, with an even more heightened sense of urgency and concern for probation's continued viability and capacity to promote public safety," the Chief Justice said in a letter to the governor dated July 7, 2010. "Absent an additional allocation of funds in Fiscal Year 2011, there will be a compounded and an accelerated deterioration in probation services. This predictable sequence will begin with a loss of probation officer jobs and the attendant increase in caseload size, reductions in both frequency and quality of offender supervision, and heightened threats to public safety."

Two days after the Chief Justice's correspondence, the Governor directed Comptroller Daniel Hynes to delegate an additional \$20 million for use by the Supreme Court to fund probation reimbursements.

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Governor Restores Additional Funding for Probation Add One

“This is the second year in a row that the Governor has graciously responded to the Supreme Court’s requests that fiscal resources for probation services be increased beyond what the legislature has initially appropriated,” said Chief Justice Fitzgerald. “I, the Court and the hundreds of persons who make probation services work in this state are very grateful.

“As I have said in my comments earlier this year before the Appropriation Committees of both houses of the legislature, probation services are a vital component of public safety. The Supreme Court has a firm belief in the value of probation services and an unwavering commitment to sustain its availability as a practical sentencing alternative in the State of Illinois.

“Though far short of the 100 percent statutory mandate to reimburse counties for probation expenditures, these additional dollars will raise funding to a level which will avoid further erosion of probation’s critical public safety mission.”

If the statutory full amount of reimbursement to the counties for probation services were appropriated, it would be as much as \$95 million.

“We are grateful to the Governor for the increased allocation of funds for probation services,” said Director Cobbs. “The Supreme Court and the Administrative Office will continue our fiscal stewardship of the additional funds to ensure probation services in Illinois are targeted to promote improved public safety.”

In 2009, Illinois probation officers supervised more than 97,000 adults and nearly 15,000 juveniles. They also conducted more than 37,900 bond and pre-sentence investigations and staffed 16 juvenile detention centers with an average daily population of almost 500 youths.

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