

The story is based on a recent column by Illinois Supreme Court Chief Justice Lloyd Karmeier

Added Money for Illinois Court to Benefit Local Governments

Article Reference

Year in and year out, conflict between the executive branch and the General Assembly exacerbated the state's financial woes and sent the courts scrambling to find new strategies for meeting their obligations under the law. At one point, the state went nearly 800 days without a full budget. For five straight years, the Supreme Court's appropriation level remained flat as the expenses we were required to meet continued to mount. We were rapidly approaching the breaking point, especially with respect to reimbursement for probation services.

Fortunately, there has been a dramatic change. This year – for the first time – I was able to report to my colleagues at the Conference of Chief Justices that Illinois could not only boast of a functional court, but also of a government that was finally able to provide the judicial branch with a timely and workable budget. For Fiscal Year 2020, our appropriation from the General Revenue Fund was increased to \$405,321,200, a figure that is \$60.5 million higher than each of the previous five years.

While substantial, this long overdue increase is hardly a windfall. Rather than fund new initiatives, it will be used primarily to catch up on existing financial responsibilities that have continued to rise even as our budget remained stagnant. Most significant will be the change in our level of probation reimbursement, which had fallen far below statutory requirements.