MEMO OF SUPPORT

S3849 (Hoylman-Sigal) / A1100-A (Bores)

Authorizes legislature to increase number of NY Supreme Court justices

March 28, 2025

TITLE OF BILL

Concurrent resolution of the senate and assembly proposing amendments to article 6 of the constitution, in relation to the number of supreme court justices in any judicial district.

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

Reinvent Albany supports this constitutional amendment because we believe it will make NYS courts more efficient.

NYS courts suffered a severe backlog during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the courts are finally closing more cases than they receive, the limit on NYS Supreme Court justices has put a huge strain on the Supreme Court and forced it to borrow from other courts to keep from being overwhelmed. As the NYC Bar notes, borrowing judges from other jurisdictions has had a cascading effect and is severely impacting their operations.

Lifting the cap will increase the court's capacity and help it clear the enormous pandemic case backlog. We urge the Legislature to pass this resolution a second time.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

Section 1 amends Article 6 §6(d) of the NYS Constitution to remove the limit on the number of NY Supreme Court justices, allowing the Legislature to increase the number without limit. Currently, the maximum allowed is one justice per 50,000 residents.

Section 2 provides that the resolution must be voted on again, then approved by voters.