

**For Immediate Release**

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**Chief Justice Calls for Legislation to Modernize Vermont Judiciary**

Vermont Chief Justice Paul L. Reiber addressed a joint assembly of the Vermont legislature on Thursday, February 19, 2009, about the “State of the Vermont Judiciary.”

The Chief Justice called for legislation to complete Vermont’s move to a “unified court system,” as required by existing provisions of Vermont’s Constitution. He indicated that when the unified court system is fully implemented, it will cut the operating costs of the courts to the taxpayers of the State and will improve the delivery of equal access to justice for all Vermonters.

Acknowledging the challenging economic times that face all three branches of government, Reiber described the need for statutory changes in order to allow Vermont courts to respond to the needs of its twenty-first century citizens. A unified court would maintain business flexibility in order to meet changing resources and demands while improving access to justice, all in a more cost-efficient manner.

Chief Justice Reiber emphasized the need for long-term stability in the funding and operation of the Judicial Branch in order for the courts to continue to meet their responsibilities to the citizens of Vermont.

“This is an historic moment,” he stated, “to provide Vermonters with a court system as modern and forward-looking as they are.”

Reiber stated: “The goal is to build a justice system that is both unified and flexible, that will serve justice in both good times and bad times.” He also discussed the new and important role that technology will play in meeting these goals.

The Chief Justice is serving as Chair of the Commission on Judicial Operation, which is studying the challenges facing the court system. The Commission was created at the request of the Legislature. Some of the areas that the Commission is exploring include consolidation of staff, regionalization of administrative functions, the use of technology, and reallocation of court jurisdiction, as well as looking at “any other idea for the efficient and effective delivery of judicial services.” This work, aided by a grant from the National Center for State Courts to the Vermont Judiciary, will assist in developing an efficient, modern and cohesive uniform court system that will best benefit Vermonters in the twenty first century.

The full text of Chief Justice Reiber’s address to the Judiciary can be found at [www.vermontjudiciary.org](http://www.vermontjudiciary.org) . Scroll down to press releases.

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