

**House Public Safety Subcommittee
of the
House Appropriations Committee**

BUDGET ADDRESS

Chief Judge M. Yvette Miller

January 26, 2010

Last year the Court of Appeals of Georgia had a reduction in force of ten employees on the Court, five lawyers, two clerks office personnel, two administrative assistants and a Fiscal Office employee. In addition, the Court slashed its operating expenses to the bone. For these actions, the Court of Appeals was criticized in many corners for acting too harshly and too quickly.

This year, the Court of Appeals has received criticism for not doing enough. The actions the Court of Appeals took in the FY2009 budget resulted in a savings of \$1.1 million, which savings continue this year and every year thereafter until such positions are refilled or the operation cuts are restored.

Considering the reductions in force, the reductions in operating expenses, the 25 percent withhold from the June draw and the statewide changes which resulted in a diminution of the Court of Appeals' budget; the total amount of budget reduction for the Court of Appeals of Georgia for FY2009 was 14.1 percent.

The Court of Appeals has identified furlough days as a way to address the reduction of the Court's budget. To date, the Court has planned for a 5 percent withhold plus three furlough days, which equates to 6 percent (three furlough days equals one percent of the Court's budget). To reach this figure, the Court will have to endure 13 furlough days during this fiscal year.

Through January 22, 2010, the Court has experienced five furlough days. By freezing salaries and raises, having judges furlough and giving up or severely reducing judges' travel, the Court can realize about a two and half days of savings of furloughs. This still means the Court is looking at five or six more furlough days this fiscal year.

Until such times as the Legislature actually passes the supplemental budget, the Court has not identified other budget cuts. Hopefully when the Legislature passes the FY2010 Supplemental Budget, the Court of Appeals will have a better understanding of where its budget is and any further reductions it must make, assuming it can make further reductions and complete its Constitutional requirements. If budget reductions reach eight or nine percent, the number of furlough days needed will be increased to about 4 furlough days for each additional percent of reduction.