

STATE SENATOR • MICKEY SWITALSKI • 10TH DISTRICT

Switalski Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jun 5, 2009

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Switalski Calls for Judicial Reductions

Roseville Democrat calls for reducing judgeships, court positions through attrition to save over \$10 million

LANSING- State Senator Michael Switalski (D-Roseville) announced legislation today that would save taxpayers nearly \$10 million by reducing the number of judges in Michigan.

“Under current Michigan law, once a judge reaches the age of 70, the judge can continue to serve the rest of their term but can no longer stand for election. That creates an opportunity to downsize the judiciary to a size that fits Michigan’s shrinking resources,” said Switalski. “There are 9 circuit court judges across the state who would be ineligible for election in 2010 and by not filling these positions, a savings of about \$1.3 million for the state’s General Fund can be achieved.”

“These are times unlike any other in Michigan,” said Switalski. “It is clear to me that Michigan’s government will require a dramatic downsizing, and I offer an opportunity to begin that process in the Judiciary. At a time when we are cutting revenue sharing, these reductions may be met with cheers by the affected counties, because each judge costs the county nearly \$1 million to fund the Court Officer, Judicial Secretary, Court Reporter, along with operational costs and judicial benefits, in addition to the two prosecuting attorneys who staff the courtroom.” Statewide that saves about \$9 million, including \$2 million in Macomb County. Together, with the \$1.3 million in judicial salaries, that adds up to over \$10 million.

“Downsizing state government means reducing the number of judges in Michigan,” said Switalski. “I believe those efforts should begin with the Court of Appeals and the Circuit Courts. We have a limited opportunity to begin that process by attrition, and the time is right to seize that opportunity. But the status quo is not sustainable. The sooner we reconcile ourselves to changing operations to fit our new economic realities, the sooner we create the foundation necessary for Michigan’s revival.”

According to Switalski, savings in the judiciary can also be made either by delaying filling vacancies, combining areas of jurisdiction, and cross-assignments of judicial positions. Part-time, temporary, and visiting judges could also be used to manage the docket. All these alternatives would be preferable to multiple furlough days.

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