



**SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM
THE LONG ISLAND ASSOCIATION**

**BY MATTHEW COHEN
VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Joint Public Hearing: Court Consolidation
New York State Senate Standing Committee on the Judiciary
New York State Assembly Standing Committee on the Judiciary
November 21, 2019**

Chairman Hoylman and Chairman Dinowitz, thank you for the opportunity to offer our input as part of the public hearing process to evaluate the court system in New York State.

My name is Matthew Cohen. I am Vice President of Government Affairs & Communications for the Long Island Association (“LIA”), which is the leading business organization in the region. The LIA supports modernizing and streamlining the New York State court system to make it more efficient for all New Yorkers, and we commend Chief Judge Janet DiFiore as she takes on this important initiative.

The Chief Judge has made important gains in improving the management of the most unwieldy trial court system in the country. However, the present structure imposes a ceiling on the success of her efforts, through the Excellence Initiative, to shrink civil and criminal caseloads while ensuring the timely and equitable administration of justice.

With eleven distinct trial courts, it is difficult for judges, lawyers and litigants to navigate their respective jurisdictional boundaries; and for court administrators to deploy judicial and nonjudicial resources where they are most needed. In fact, New York is alone among the fifty states in having so many trial courts and the issues that go with them. No other state has more than eight such

courts, and most, including the six largest states outside of New York, have five or fewer. California, the nation's largest state, has only one.

For the business community, the delays in the case backlog in the commercial court can result in unnecessary costs for business litigants, employers and municipalities. Moreover, New York's courts have limited ability to move judges around to address case load needs in the different courts which has consequently impacted commercial court litigants. These litigants then look to move their cases to places like Delaware where their courts can provide relatively faster disposition of business disputes, also leading to a concomitant economic benefit for that state.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit this testimony. In your deliberations, we respectfully urge you to consider our support of Chief Judge DiFiore's proposal for a constitutional amendment to establish a more effective, simpler and fairer court system.