



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

NEWS RELEASE

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Failure to Fully Fund Judicial Computer Project Triggers Layoff

HARRISBURG, July 9, 1994 — State Supreme Court Justice Stephen A. Zappala today announced the elimination of nearly one third of the state Judicial Computer Project's staff, mostly through layoffs. The action results from the General Assembly's failure to fully fund the Project, Zappala said in letters mailed to Legislative Leaders.

"While support for the Project from a number of legislators -- including eighteen cosponsors of Senate legislation (SB 1657) to address this problem -- has been gratifying, ultimately even that support was insufficient to allow the Judiciary to continue our successful computerization efforts," said Zappala.

Sixteen Judicial Computer Project (JCP) staff were laid off, two Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts staff were terminated, and six recently vacated JCP positions were eliminated.

"These layoffs are extraordinarily regrettable, both because they represent unnecessary personal suffering to those affected and because the effect on the Judicial Computer Project will be long-lasting," said Zappala. "Nevertheless, not to cut JCP expenses in light of the Project's serious funding deficiencies would have been irresponsible."

Zappala said the cuts will immediately curtail development of the Project's Common Pleas automation efforts and also will affect ongoing operations of the automated District Justice System, which was completed in December, 1992.

"The Supreme Court remains steadfast in its support for statewide computerization of our trial courts; we are prepared to build upon our successful automation of District Justice Courts, but it is clear that we can not do so without adequate funding," said Zappala. "Our efforts to secure such funding will continue, but our progress of necessity has been slowed."

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