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September 10, 2009

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Vote YES on Senate Bill 5968.

S.5968 will provide new Family Court judges in counties throughout New York State.

Family Courts in counties across the State must have enough judges to adjudicate the great number of cases that impact New York's children and families. One of the outstanding problems facing the many vulnerable families and, especially, children in our State is the lack of a sufficient number of judges. This bill will create twenty one new family court judgeships across the State.

Modern Courts, a statewide non-partisan court reform organization, recently conducted a series of interviews of people from across the state with decades of experience in Family Court, including judges, litigants, defense counsel, lawyers for children, academics, court personnel, advocates for survivors of domestic violence, specialists in technology, *pro bono* coordinators, administrators and legal service providers. All agreed that more judges are necessary to meet the ever increasing case loads and complex problems facing families. Modern Courts also reviewed the numerous reports and studies on Family Court and issued its own report - *A Call to Action: The Crisis in Family Court: Recommendations for Leadership and Reform*.

As stated in the report, "The Fund for Modern Courts, through the work of its Task Force, recognizes that without the additional resources, specifically an increased number of Family Court judges ...the reforms Family Court so critically needs will be incomplete."

Your support of S.5968 would provide the first major infusion of new Family Court Judges in over three decades. Your support would address the crisis in Family Court. As one interviewee expressed, "Family Court cases are the most important cases in the most important court." Please vote Yes on S.5968

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis R. Hawkins
Executive Director

Denise Kronstadt
Deputy Director