



News Release

For Immediate Release

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DRI President Hails 2015 Congressional Agreement for Funding of the Federal Judiciary

Calls for Attention Now to Be Focused on the Dire Needs of State Courts

CHICAGO – (December 17, 2014)—DRI president John Parker Sweeney hailed Congressional leaders of the House and Senate for the new and increased 2015 funding for the federal judiciary included in the omnibus funding bill that recently passed both houses of Congress.

DRI is a professional organization of 22,000 attorneys of the defense bar, the largest organization in the country exclusively representing defense attorneys. It has made funding of the judiciary a major focus over the past year and a half with several major initiatives directed to the leadership of the House and Senate, the Judiciary Committees, the White House and joint initiatives with judicial organizations and the plaintiff bar, and in support of a petition of 87 Chief Judges of the federal district courts. DRI recently published “The Economics of Justice”, a white paper detailing the adverse economic impacts on states and local communities of an underfunded judiciary. “The Economics of Justice” can be viewed in full [here](#).

“Sequestration was devastating for the federal courts, reducing its budget by \$350 million,” said Sweeney. “This resulted in a staffing loss of 11%, thousands of furlough days, court closings and hour reductions, a virtual halt to construction and major maintenance, reductions in court security, and lengthy delays in processing cases, especially in civil cases that create uncertainty in the business community. I think it is not unreasonable to say that justice has been on hold in many of our courts and that courts have been prevented from carrying out their constitutionally mandated responsibilities.”

Through the spending bill, the Judiciary will receive \$6.7 billion in discretionary appropriations. This is a 2.8 percent, or \$182 million, increase above FY 2014 discretionary funding. The FY 2015 level is approximately equivalent to the Judiciary’s FY 2015 funding request.

“The crisis in the judiciary, however, is in no way resolved yet,” warned Sweeney. “The state courts where the great majority of the country’s disputes and criminal charges are adjudicated, are still grossly underfunded resulting in the same impacts that previously afflicted the federal

judiciary. We would urge all state legislatures to consider the recent federal action and address state funding issues at the earliest possible moment.”

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About DRI – The Voice of the Defense Bar

For more than fifty years, DRI has been the voice of the defense bar, advocating for 22,000 defense attorneys, commercial trial attorneys, and corporate counsel and defending the integrity of the civil judiciary. A thought leader, DRI provides world-class legal education, deep expertise for policy-makers, legal resources, and networking opportunities to facilitate career and law firm growth. For more information, log on to www.dri.org