



## **SUFFOLK LAWYERS FOR JUSTICE, INC.**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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# **NEWS RELEASE**

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The Board of Suffolk Lawyers for Justice (“SLJ”), a non-profit corporation dedicated to ensuring that poor people in Suffolk County receive competent and zealous representation in the criminal courts, after careful deliberation, has decided that SLJ can no longer fulfill its mission as long as their attorneys are not paid for work performed during the past fiscal year which ended on June 30, 2003. Starting on Monday, August 18, 2003, private attorneys, who regularly accept court appointments in Suffolk County to represent indigent defendants in the criminal courts, will no longer accept any new case assignments until a deficiency budget is approved and they are paid for work previously performed. The mission of Suffolk Lawyers for Justice is to ensure that poor people, both children and adults, accused of crimes in Suffolk County receive competent and zealous representation. It is simply not possible to meet this goal given the current failure to compensate attorneys for work performed last fiscal year. Most court appointed attorneys are paid \$30 to \$39 an hour (without any benefits, medical coverage, vacation, or compensation for office rental or related office expenses) to represent the poorest members of the community. Collectively, the 335 lawyers who comprise Suffolk Lawyers for Justice are owed for many months of work performed this past fiscal year and they overwhelmingly have voiced their intention to decline new cases until they are paid for that work. They will continue to honor their professional commitment to represent all of their present clients and call upon all community organizations, elected officials, fellow members of the bar and all concerned residents to express their support and urge approval of the deficiency budget.

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