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## **Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association Opposes Sequestration of the Federal Judiciary**

CLEVELAND – September 27, 2013 – The Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association strongly opposes the sequestration, or deep budget cuts, on the federal judiciary currently proposed in the federal budget because it impedes access to justice, undermines the responsibilities of the judicial branch and reduces critical resources that allow the judiciary to discharge its duty to uphold the rule of law.

“With recent funding cuts, and more pending, we find our federal judiciary facing a crisis that affects us all,” said CMBA President Jonathan Leiken. “The U.S. Constitution established separate, co-equal branches of government. This careful checks and balances system is seriously compromised when the judicial branch – due to budget cuts – lacks the resources to properly discharge its constitutional responsibilities.”

The federal judiciary requires sufficient funds to perform the core functions assigned to it by the Constitution and Congress, including adjudicating all cases filed in federal courts; supervising defendants awaiting trial and criminals on post-conviction release; providing representation for indigent defendants; securing jurors for jury trials; and ensuring the safety of all those who work at or enter federal court facilities. These are vast responsibilities that generate a workload over which the judiciary has no control.

Home to the United States District Court (Northern District of Ohio) and the United States Bankruptcy Court; Greater Cleveland is already experiencing the negative effects of current sequestration and preparing for additional funding cuts.

“Our federal courts have continued to face unrelenting budgetary pressure, which has harmed the administration of justice and deprived the courts of the resources needed to properly supervise federal detainees released pre- or post-trial,” said Chief Judge Solomon Oliver, Jr., United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio. “If Congress fails to act, we will see a negative ripple effect on the entire judicial system, including case management, defender and probation services, support programs and more; all of which can increase risk to public safety.”

“Budget cuts have led to reductions in staff, shorter court hours, scaled back programs and services, as well as significant delays in judicial proceedings,” added Judge Dan Aaron Polster, United States District Court, Northern District of Ohio. “These delays and cuts, which harm individuals, small businesses, and corporations, will continue to diminish the ability of the courts to timely and effectively render justice the longer sequestration lasts.”

The CMBA, with nearly 6,000 members and representing the largest legal community in the state, has received the overwhelming support of its members to take its concerns and message to Congress and defend our federal judiciary.

“The CMBA represents not only our members, but more broadly the collective interests of the citizens and businesses with business in these courts. In harmony with many bar associations, we are urging Congress to restore federal judiciary budgets to levels that allow the fragile judicial branch to effectively and efficiently carry out its mission,” said Leiken. “As lawyers, we cannot sit back and quietly allow this critical branch of government to be further impaired. Defending the judiciary is part of the responsibility of the legal profession and a role the bar association takes seriously.”

**About the CMBA**

The nonprofit Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association operates as a center for legal professionalism in the region, promoting the highest ethical and professional standards. Serving the largest legal community in the state, the CMBA has nearly 6,000 members. Learn more at [www.clemetrobar.org](http://www.clemetrobar.org).

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