

Lawyers Getting Paid Not To Work

By: Leslie White

Are lawyers getting paid not to work? Apparently so. The latest law firm to offer packages to its delayed first year incoming class is Pillsbury. Yes, the same Pillsbury that was caught shouting off names of the lawyers it was planning to layoff (See "Pillsbury Debacle: Can You Hear Me Now?").

The firm has delayed start dates for its incoming first year associates to January 2010. It is also offering \$60,000 to associates willing to forget about working at the firm. Other law firms have been offering \$75,000 for the same deal. The firm has also announced a public interest fellowship program. Rather than paying associates to do work with a non-profit or government agency, Pillsbury will pay \$5,000 per month directly to the employer.

Getting paid not to work, or to take a public interest job sounds pretty good to me. It's too bad law firms were not this generous to the 4,671 lawyers that have been laid off since January 1, 2008, according to Law Shucks.

Does this make any sense to anyone? If law firms have this much cash to spend on graduating law students who never produced anything for them, were all the layoffs economically justified? You be the judge.