

CENTER *for* JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.*

Post Office Box 8101
White Plains, New York 10602

Tel. (914)455-4373

E-Mail: cja@judgewatch.org
Website: www.judgewatch.org

January 2, 2014

TO: New York State Bar Association
New York City Bar Association
New York County Lawyers Association
Fiscal Policy Institute
Empire Center for Public Policy
Manhattan Institute for Policy Research
We the People Foundation
Citizens Budget Commission
Citizens Union
New York State League of Women Voters
New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG)
Common Cause-New York
Citizen Action of New York
Brennan Center for Justice

FROM: Elena Ruth Sassower, Director
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

RE: ACHIEVING NYS BUDGET REFORM: What is Your Expert Opinion of the Budgets Proposed by New York's Judiciary & Legislative Branches? – & How Should the Governor and Legislature be Reviewing Them, Consistent with Article VII of the NYS Constitution?

The People of New York have an important opportunity to achieve non-partisan, good-government budget reform.

By letter dated December 11, 2013, our nonpartisan, nonprofit citizens' organization, Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA), called upon the Governor and Legislature to take steps to reject the entirety of the Judiciary's proposed budget for fiscal year 2014-2015, because it lacks itemization necessary and sufficient for meaningful review and violates Article VII, §7 of the New York State Constitution. As illustrative, the third phase of the judicial salary increase recommended by the August 29, 2011 report of the Special Commission on Judicial Compensation, whose very presence in the Judiciary's proposed budget is wholly concealed.

* **Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)** is a national, non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization, working to ensure that the processes of judicial selection and discipline are effective and meaningful.

Three weeks later, by letter dated December 30, 2013, CJA called upon the Governor and Legislature to reject the Legislature's proposed budget for fiscal year 2014-2015 – and not only for lack of necessary and sufficient itemization, but because it is not certified and is missing “General State Charges”.

Each letter also proposed procedures by which these budgets should be reviewed and rejected by the Governor and Legislature, consistent with Article VII of New York's Constitution and foundational principles of legitimate legislative process.

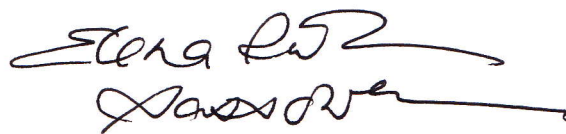
The letters further identified that we would be:

“contacting scholars of New York's Constitution and budget, bar associations with committees pertaining to these issues, and so-called ‘good-government groups’ to request that they offer expert opinion.” (December 11, 2013 letter, at p. 8; also December 30, 2013 letter, at p. 7).

To that end, over these past weeks, I telephoned many of you and alerted you to our website, www.judgewatch.org, containing the December 11, 2013 letter and all its substantiating referred-to evidence, accessible *via* our hyperlink entitled “CJA Leads the Way to NYS Budget Reform, Starting with the Judiciary Budget”. That same hyperlink now posts the December 30, 2013 letter and I have made further phone calls to many of you today about it.

Please let me hear from you, as soon as possible, following your review of both letters – and kindly forward this solicitation to other organizations, associations, academic institutions, think tanks, and scholars with expertise on New York's Constitution and governance, inviting their input, as well.

Thank you.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The top signature is 'Elena Ruiz' and the bottom signature is 'James O'Neil'. Both signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

cc: The Public & The Press