

CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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August 2, 2024

TO: Bruce A. Hidley/Albany County Clerk & County FOIL Officer

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

RE: FOIL Request for publicly-available records pertaining to the recusal of the Albany County Attorney from the inquiry into the bonus payments that D.A. Soares gave to himself from state grant monies and his “longevity payments” – and the County’s retention of outside counsel

This is to request publicly-available records pertaining to the recusal of the Albany County Attorney, in or about December 2023/January 2024, from the inquiry into the bonus payments that D.A. Soares gave to himself from state grant monies and his “longevity payments” – and the retention of outside counsel Bond, Schoeneck & King – whose specifics do not appear to have been reported by the Albany Times Union¹ or other local journalism.

In particular, I request:

- (1) such paperwork as the County Attorney was required to fill out specifying its conflict(s) of interest and requesting retention of private outside counsel;
- (2) records reflecting approval(s) thereof;
- (3) records reflecting the process by which private outside counsel was solicited and selected;
- (4) the County’s signed and approved retainer agreement with Bond, Schoeneck & King;
- (5) records reflecting whether the County Attorney or other knowledgeable County officers disclosed to Bond, Schoeneck & King CJA’s 2016 correspondence and FOIL requests pertaining to D.A. Soares’ state-mandated

¹ As illustrative, the Albany Times Union’s articles “Albany county district attorney’s self-anointed bonus under scrutiny” (Feb. 8, 2024, Steve Hughes) and “Report: Soares’ 22K bonus to self appears to violate law” (Feb. 9, 2024, Steve Hughes) and editorial “An extra helping” (Feb. 15, 2024).

[Judiciary Law §183-a D.A. annual salary](#) and his other “compensation and non-salary benefits”;

- (6) payments to Bond, Schoeneck & King pursuant to the retainer agreement.

In addition to designating the “County Attorney” as a “Department” to respond to this FOIL request, please additionally include “Comptrollers”; “County Legislature”; “County Executive”, and “Management & Budget”.

Thank you.

s/ ELENA SASSOWER