

**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>  
**Sent:** Saturday, August 24, 2024 10:31 AM  
**To:** 'sgilbert@wamc.org'; 'srosenberry@wamc.org'  
**Cc:** 'ipick@wamc.org'; 'ipickus@wamc.org'; 'dlucas@wamc.org';  
'news@wamc.org'; 'guistina@wamc.org'; 'media@wamc.org';  
'roundtable@wamc.org'  
**Subject:** **Your "Local Journalism" & State Reporting -- Politically-Explosive Election Story Impacting the D.A., State Legislative, and Judicial Races in WAMC's Counties of Coverage**  
**Attachments:** [7-17-24-complaint-vs-soares-to-albany-ethics.pdf](#);  
[7-17-24-transmittal-to-soares.pdf](#)

TO: [WAMC](#)  
[President & CEO Sarah Gilbert](#)  
[Chief Operating Officer Stacey Rosenberry](#)

Other than an August 20<sup>th</sup> automated e-mail from your Capital Region Bureau Chief Lucas that he is “currently out of the office but checking email regularly...please send the information to [news@wamc.org](mailto:news@wamc.org)”, which I had already done, I have received no response to my below August 20<sup>th</sup> email requesting your oversight over him and News Director Pickus. Is this because you have not responded – and, if so, what is the reason?

As [WAMC's broadcast and reporting range](#) is, obviously, Albany County and presumably reaches all or parts of Montgomery and Herkimer counties, each of which have D.A. elections, I will now send you three e-mails pertaining to the D.A., state legislative, and judicial elections in each of these counties. Except for the specifics as relate to each county, the three e-mails are identical and part of the larger story furnished, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, to the Legislative Correspondents Association's roster of reporters, entitled: "[INFORMING THE VOTERS: NY's Most Important D.A. Race -- for Albany D.A. -- Upending NY's 13 Other D.A. Races, 213 State Legislative Races, & Judicial Races](#)".

Were Messrs. Lucas and Pickus unaware of this August 15<sup>th</sup> e-mail to LCA reporters when they chose not to respond to my below August 16<sup>th</sup> e-mail to them? In any event, they already had its explosive underlying Albany components by my below August 2<sup>nd</sup> e-mail with its above two attachments: my July 17<sup>th</sup> ethics complaint against Albany D.A. Soares to the Albany County Ethics Commission and my July 17<sup>th</sup> transmitting letter to D.A. Soares – to which they had not responded.

IF it is your news judgment that my August 2<sup>nd</sup> e-mail to Messrs. Lucas and Pickus, my above-linked August 15<sup>th</sup> e-mail to LCA reporters, and my three e-mails pertaining to the Albany, Montgomery, and Herkimer County D.A., state legislative, and judicial elections are NOT essential news for IMMEDIATE investigation and report by WAMC and the press entities with which it collaborates, as, for instance, the [New York Public News Network](#) of which it is a member, I request that all five e-mails be IMMEDIATELY forwarded to [WAMC's Board of Trustees](#) for their oversight – and, if necessary, placed on the agenda of its September 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

By the way, is WAMC planning to do ANY investigative reporting of the records, in office, of re-election-seeking D.A., state legislative, and judicial incumbents – or of the “process” by which they and other candidates secured party lines on the election ballots? Shouldn’t WAMC’s **non-performance** in this regard – and that of ALL other New York press – be examined by WAMC’s [Media Project](#), to which Mr. Pickus participates, as part of an evaluation as to whether, in fact, voters have the information necessary to cast intelligent votes for these important public offices? How about by WAMC’s [Legislative Gazette](#), which bills itself as “the region's most in-depth look at New York State politics and government”, hosted by David Guistina, who produces the Media Project and also hosts [The Capitol Connection](#).

Please advise – and as soon as possible. As always, I am ready to assist WAMC to the max.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)

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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 20, 2024 3:46 PM  
**To:** 'sgilbert@wamc.org' <[sgilbert@wamc.org](mailto:sgilbert@wamc.org)>; 'rosenberry@wamc.org' <[rosenberry@wamc.org](mailto:rosenberry@wamc.org)>  
**Cc:** 'ipick@wamc.org' <[ipick@wamc.org](mailto:ipick@wamc.org)>; 'ipickus@wamc.org' <[ipickus@wamc.org](mailto:ipickus@wamc.org)>;  
'dlucas@wamc.org' <[dlucas@wamc.org](mailto:dlucas@wamc.org)>; 'news@wamc.org' <[news@wamc.org](mailto:news@wamc.org)>

**Subject: OVERSIGHT REQUIRED -- What NYS counties are within WAMC's reporting & broadcast range? And have you overlooked my Aug 2, 2024 e-mail?**

TO: [WAMC President & CEO Sarah Gilbert](#)  
[WAMC Chief Operating Officer Stacey Rosenberry](#)

I have received no response from News Director Pickus or Capital Region Bureau Chief Lucas, or anyone else at WAMC to my below e-mails, with the above-attached.

Kindly assist them in discharging their duties.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)

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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 16, 2024 3:56 PM  
**To:** 'ipickus@wamc.org' <[ipickus@wamc.org](mailto:ipickus@wamc.org)>; 'ipick@wamc.org' <[ipick@wamc.org](mailto:ipick@wamc.org)>  
**Cc:** 'dlucas@wamc.org' <[dlucas@wamc.org](mailto:dlucas@wamc.org)>

**Subject: What NYS counties are within WAMC's reporting & broadcast range? And have you overlooked my Aug 2, 2024 e-mail?**

**TO:** [WAMC News Director Pickus](#)

Following up my voice mail message for you, a short time ago, please advise as to the New York counties which, in whole or part, are within WAMC's reporting and [broadcast range](#). Specifically, with respect to [counties having D.A races this year](#), apart from Albany County, which, obviously is one such county, does WAMC report on and broadcast to Montgomery, Herkimer, Madison, Cortland, and Tompkins Counties?

Additionally, with respect to Albany County, did you and Capital Region Bureau Chief Lucas both overlook my below serious and substantial August 2<sup>nd</sup> e-mail, with the above-attached, to which I received no response. Please additionally advise as to it.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 2, 2024 4:15 PM  
**To:** 'dlucas@wamc.org' <[dlucas@wamc.org](mailto:dlucas@wamc.org)>; 'ipickus@wamc.org' <[ipickus@wamc.org](mailto:ipickus@wamc.org)>; 'news@wamc.org' <[news@wamc.org](mailto:news@wamc.org)>

**Subject: Albany County Ethics Commission -- & Albany D.A. Soares**

**TO:** [WAMC/Northeast Public Radio – an NPR station](#)

Dave Lucas, Capital Region Bureau Chief  
Ian Pickus, News Director

Earlier today, I filed a FOIL request with Albany County, [#24-391](#), whose first paragraph, referencing Albany's "local journalism", such as WAMC, reads:

"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 Union<sup>fn1</sup> or other local journalism.”

Unless I hear from you to the contrary, I will assume that WAMC, which produced stories on the topic, did not report on the specifics the FOIL request identifies.

Meantime, above-attached, for your journalism, is my July 17<sup>th</sup> ethics complaint to the Albany County Ethics Commission against D.A. Soares and its accompanying letter to him – as to which the threshold issue, reflected by my below August 2<sup>nd</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup> e-mails, is whether the Albany County Attorney, which functions as legal counsel for the Ethics Commission, will be recusing itself. CJA’s webpage for the complaint is [here](#).

I am available to answer questions, no matter how early or late – and over the weekend. Please let me hear from you by the end of the day, Monday, August 5<sup>th</sup>, as to whether WAMC will be reporting on this far-reaching politically-explosive complaint, showcasing the integrity and efficacy of Albany County’s own Ethics Commission – and, if not, the reason.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)

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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgewatch.org](mailto:elena@judgewatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 2, 2024 11:11 AM  
**To:** 'Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov' <[Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov)>;  
'necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov' <[necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov)>

**Subject: STATUS? -- CJA's July 17, 2024 conflict-of-interest complaint to the Albany County Ethics Commission vs D.A. Soares**

**TO: Albany County Ethics Commission**  
c/o Law Department Counsel – Asst. County Attorney Sia Zois Googas  
c/o Clerk of the Legislature Necole Chambers

I have received no response to my below “**EXPEDITION REQUIRED**” July 18<sup>th</sup> e-mail, with its above two attachments. On [July 19<sup>th</sup>](#) I mailed originals of all three “in an Envelope Marked ‘Confidential’...c/o Clerk of the Legislature”. What is the status?

Please confirm that (1) the office of the Albany County Attorney has recused itself due to its obvious conflicts of interest and has advised the Albany County Ethics Commission of the steps necessary for obtaining outside counsel; (2) that the Ethics Commission has concurred and has already taken such steps; and (3) that the County is in process of soliciting and retaining outside counsel for the Ethics Commission – or has already done so.

Meantime, I have today filed a FOIL request pertaining to the recusal of the office of the Albany County Attorney, in or about December 2023/January 2024, from the inquiry concerning 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 to make findings and report. The August 2<sup>nd</sup> FOIL request has been assigned [#24-391](#).

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)  
[www.judgwatch.org](http://www.judgwatch.org)  
914-421-1200  
[elena@judgwatch.org](mailto:elena@judgwatch.org)

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**From:** Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <[elena@judgwatch.org](mailto:elena@judgwatch.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 18, 2024 2:35 PM  
**To:** 'Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov' <[Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:Sia.Googas@albanycountyny.gov)>;  
'necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov' <[necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:necole.chambers@albanycountyny.gov)>  
**Cc:** 'David.Soares@albanycountyny.gov' <[David.Soares@albanycountyny.gov](mailto:David.Soares@albanycountyny.gov)>

**Subject: EXPEDITION REQUIRED BY ALBANY COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION: Conflict of Interest  
Complaint vs Albany County D.A. Soares**

**TO: Albany County Ethics Commission**

c/o Law Department Counsel – Asst. County Attorney Sia Zois Googas  
c/o Clerk of the Legislature Necole Chambers

Attached is the Center for Judicial Accountability’s signed and notarized July 17, 2024 ethics complaint against Albany County District Attorney P. David Soares for violation of Albany County’s Code of Ethics, proscribing financial interest and mandating recusal. CJA’s webpage on which it is posted is [here](#).

In conformity with the instructions on the complaint form and the [Ethics Commission’s website](#), the complaint will also be mailed “in an Envelope Marked ‘Confidential’...c/o Clerk of the Legislature”. You will find, however, that reviewing the complaint from the above-attached or posted pdf is far more useful, as it contains live hyperlinks to the evidence, to facilitate verification.

I note that the [sole](#) “Ethics Commission Determination” posted on the Commission’s website, that of [November 15, 2023](#), states “Due to the Law Department having a conflict [pertaining to the subject complaint], the Commission determined that outside counsel was necessary to handle the preliminary review phase investigation”.

In light of the particulars of this complaint (at pp. 5-8) pertaining to my 2016 e-mails to then County Attorney Daniel Lynch, alerting him to the situation and to his duty, I trust the Ethics Commission will similarly decide that the Law Department has a conflict and that outside counsel must be retained.

Please confirm that this is the case – and that the Ethics Commission, whose next meeting is not until [September 25, 2024](#), will be making that decision at an IMMEDIATE meeting convened for that purpose, inasmuch as this complaint against D.A. Soares, impacting the 2024 Albany D.A. race and the races for all 213 state legislative seats, plainly requires investigation and determination PRONTO.

To further facilitate expedition, D.A. Soares is cc'd on the complaint and on this e-mail, which includes the above-attached July 17, 2024 transmittal letter to him, to which the Ethics Commission is cc'd.

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director  
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[elena@judgwatch.org](mailto:elena@judgwatch.org)