

CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC. *

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Elena Ruth Sassower, Director
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DATE: April 22 2007

TO: Social Science Research Council –
Necessary Knowledge for a Democratic Public Sphere Program

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

RE: Letter of Inquiry for Large Grants Project for Academic-Advocacy Collaboration
in Media & Communications

Project Name: BUILDING HONEST MEDIA SCHOLARSHIP & PEDAGOGY

Brief Statement of the Purpose & Nature of the Proposed Study:

Evaluating press performance requires confronting evidence. Yet media scholars and institutes of media scholarship and pedagogy have refused to confront a unique archive of primary source documents, exposing as myth a panoply of press claims about itself. Such archive establishes an ongoing pattern and practice by a broad array of media, spurning citizen engagement, thwarting reform of corrupted governmental processes, and rigging elections for complicit public officers. The proposed study will independently evaluate the significance of this unexamined archive evidence – and explore the causes and consequences of its exclusion from media scholarship and pedagogy.

The Significance of the Issue Addressed by the Project:

Our democracy becomes an impossibility when the media sabotages the civic-minded, good-government reform efforts and achievements of citizens and citizen organizations and so covers up for corrupted governmental processes that it election-rigs for the misfeasant public officers. Such is an utter perversion of the press' role of enabling civic engagement by informing citizens of what government is doing – for which the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press exists. Likewise, it is an utter perversion – and inimical to our democracy – when media scholars and research institutes refuse to confront the on-the-ground reality of press performance – and stymie essential media reform by materially false and incomplete scholarship.

* The **Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.** (CJA) is a national, non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization dedicated to ensuring that the processes of judicial selection and discipline are effective and meaningful – a goal which cannot be achieved without honest scholarship and a press discharging its First Amendment responsibilities.

How the Research Will Address the Issue:

The research will confront the unexamined documentary archive, independently evaluating the extent to which it chronicles a pattern and practice of media reporting and editorializing violative of fundamental journalistic responsibilities and destructive of our democracy. Such evaluation will then be the basis for examining why institutes of media research and pedagogy, as likewise individual scholars of media, media law, and the First Amendment, have willfully failed and refused to confront the archive evidence and integrate it into scholarship and pedagogy, with recommendations for media reform.

How the Issue Relates to the Applying Organization, and Why the Organization is Qualified to Undertake the Project:

The applying organization is the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA), a national, non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization whose correspondence with a substantial swath of media, spanning more than 15 years, constitutes the archive of primary source documents on which the research study is based.

By such correspondence, CJA over and over again provided the media with *readily-verifiable* documentary evidence of the corruption of the processes of judicial selection and discipline, involving public officers seeking re-election or further public office, as well as of the corruption of the judicial process itself. This, so that the media could independently examine it – and come to its own conclusions about these critical processes and public officers, in discharge of its First Amendment obligation to inform the public as to matters of legitimate public concern. Instead, the press knowingly and deliberately ignored this evidence in materially false and misleading reporting and editorializing, concealing the corruption issues and either writing CJA out of events to which it was integrally part or else including CJA in a distorted, disparaging fashion.

In an effort to vindicate the public's rights, as well as its own, CJA repeatedly complained to higher editors and media management, including ombudsmen and public editors, in complaints that are part of its archive of correspondence. For the same reason, CJA has brought a groundbreaking public interest lawsuit for libel and journalistic fraud against the news organization with which its correspondence is the most sustained and far-reaching – The New York Times. That lawsuit is ongoing – with a record constituting a casestudy of the very kind of *readily-verifiable* judicial corruption that the media has pretended does not exist by its taboo-like refusal to report on casefile evidence establishing that cases are “thrown” by fraudulent judicial decisions, annihilating all adjudicative standards.

Both the archive correspondence and the lawsuit record are posted on CJA's website, www.judgewatch.org – accessible *via* the sidebar panels: “Press Suppression”; “Elections 2006: Informing the Voters”; and “Suing The New York Times”. Also posted is CJA's extensive outreach to scholars and institutes of media research and pedagogy, bringing to their attention this wealth of primary source material for their comment and scholarship. These include: (1) Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University; (2) Project for Excellence in Journalism;

(3) Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism; (4) Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University; (5) Program on Law and Journalism at New York Law School; and (6) Institute for the Study of the Judiciary, Politics, and the Media at Syracuse University.

Consequently, CJA is uniquely qualified as it has direct, first-hand interaction with the media and academia that is the subject of this study.

Novelty and Utility of the Project vis-à-vis Existing Research:

The proposed evaluation of press performance from CJA's documentary archive is completely novel as there has been no scholarship or comment from the academic community about it – which is why the project is being proposed. As for the project's utility *vis-à-vis* existing research, we believe it will reveal that research into press performance by media scholars and institutes of media research and pedagogy is fatally flawed in that it fails to embrace the experience of citizen and citizen organizations interacting with the media on issues of coverage.

Geographic Area Where the Work Will Take Place:

The work will take place wherever the academic researcher is located. All that is necessary is CJA's archive of primary source documents, most of which are posted on our website. To facilitate his/her evaluation, we would be pleased to furnish "hard copies", including the fax, e-mail, and mail receipts, reflecting transmittal to the media. Inspection of our original documents is available at our headquarters in White Plains, New York.

Interviews with the media scholars and personnel of the media institutes of research and pedagogy can be conducted by phone – although visits to the institutes might be additionally useful in appreciating their financial ties to the media they purport to examine, evident from building plaques and wall displays.

Time Period for which Funding is Requested & Breakdown:

\$30,000 for one year to pay for the independent academic researcher, the article he/she will write, and the symposium at which it will be publicly presented with discussion of media reform options.

Information about Those who will be Helped By and Interested in the Work and How You Will Communicate with Them:

Everyone who cares about our democracy will be helped by this project – including the wrongdoing media and complicit academia. The explosive results will be communicated through the research article and the symposium, which will be geared to developing and implementing targeted media reform.



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

RE: Memorandum of Contact Information: CJA's Letter of Inquiry for Large Grants
Project for Academic-Advocacy Collaboration in Media & Communications

BUILDING HONEST MEDIA SCHOLARSHIP & PEDAGOGY

Name of Principal Researcher & its Contact Information:

As set forth in our April 4, 2007 small-grant application (at p. 3) – and equally true here –

“We have NO academic partner for this research project because academia has rejected all our efforts at outreach and collaboration... Upon attaining [a] collaborative grant, our first priority will be to locate the academic partner for the proposed research. Alternatively we ask that the Social Science Research Council utilize its extensive network of academic contacts to assign us a suitable academic partner.”

Name of Partnering Organization & its Contact Information:

Name: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)
Address: Post Office Box 8220, White Plains, New York 10602
Telephone: 914-421-1200
Fax: 914-428-4994
E-Mail: cja@judgewatch.org
Website: www.judgewatch.org

Name of Partnering Organization's Chief Executive Officer & Project Contact Person:

Elena Ruth Sassower, Director
Contact info is same as above. Direct e-mail is elena@judgewatch.org

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