

## Center for Judicial Accountability

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**From:** Josh Durso <dursojosh@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 13, 2016 2:26 PM  
**To:** Center for Judicial Accountability  
**Subject:** Re: 2016 ELECTIONS: A very "easy fill in the 54th Distirct" -- & beyond!

Dear Ms. Sassower,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to not only read my column in the Finger Lakes Times, but also for sending me this thoughtful note. I wanted to respond with equal thoroughness, so please pardon the length of this email.

I've taken the time to address some of the key points of your note, which you copied to our local legislators:

**1. You point out that I “seem to be under a serious misimpression” regarding the performance of Sen. Nozzolio and others. You also point out that I “appear to be unaware of their key roles in the utter corruption and dysfunction of the Legislature,” among other issues at the state level.**

*That is inaccurate for reasons that I will elaborate on later in this email. You are not the first person, and this is not the first time – that I have heard serious allegations thrown at any of our local legislators. I am not going to suggest that they are without merit – but these are not new concepts – and frankly, corruption exists up the ladder – all the way to Washington.*

**2. You pointed to a number of Finger Lakes representatives – who in your analysis have been branded as “corrupt” or significantly contributing to the corrupt nature of New York State politics.**

*That's problematic for a number of reasons. First off, it's problematic because all of the representatives you call out – are Republican – while Democrats have a political stronghold on this state. They have done much to prevent legislation that has been driven by Republicans, yet that is absent in your analysis. I find that interesting, because if anything, the value or clout carried by a Republican is minimalized in this state.*

**3. You speak about pay raises in this state, which are happening at every phase across the board. The SUNY system saw massive increases in pay – but your analysis focuses on district attorney's and the judicial system.**

*When I look at the rates of pay in the Finger Lakes – they are significantly less than the rest of the state. I attend local County Board meetings regularly – because we cover them. Seneca, Wayne, Ontario, Cayuga, Yates and Schuyler counties – to be precise. Never in my five years of covering these events – have I heard a complaint regarding the pay of any district attorney in any of those counties. Maybe they all benefit from being smaller, and paying less – but my next point will highlight a repeated problem I have with the overall tone of your note.*

**4. Your overall note is the problem most people who live in the Finger Lakes have with big government in New York State.**

*Many of the spending problems you talk about completely overlook the tangible, real, and frankly – bigger – problems we face here. Not because they are more expensive, but because they directly impact those who live here. As my column in the Finger Lakes Times points out – there are a number of issues people living in the Finger Lakes care about deeply.*

**Property taxes that aren't being paid by the Cayuga Indians, rising property/school taxes as money is shifted around, communities that are becoming less safe – with Democratic legislators in this state pushing against policies and tools that could keep our communities/citizens safer (read: Brittany's Law) and countless other items – like the reduction of employment opportunities – as small businesses are crushed. The rise of minimum wage, which would quite literally, paralyze the Finger Lakes' tourism industry if ever raised to \$15. \$12.50 could very easily close more than half of them in Seneca County and Ontario County alone. They care about giant landfills taking over their back yards. They care about the water, soil, and place they call home – turning into a municipal solid wasteland.**

*These are the issues people care about here. Frankly, the big time politics of Albany contribute to our problems – but there are much bigger, much more imposing, and much more damaging problems right on our own doorsteps that have nothing to do with the salary of a district attorney.*

Our elected officials **should be held to the highest of standards**. I couldn't agree with you more – and they should all be held accountable for the wrong they do, as well as the good. Sen. Nozzolio has done much good for Seneca, Wayne, Ontario, and Cayuga counties.

*This is not a slight at the work you, or your organization is doing to end corruption. We all would love a less-corrupt state. However, we also have to look at the tangible good that has been done for our local communities – that would never have been accomplished if we left Albany to take care of us. They have already proven that they cannot take care of themselves, much less those who are a hundred, or two hundred miles down the New York State Thruway.*

**Please note: My column in the Finger Lakes Times is written as a personal commentary. I am not employed by the Finger Lakes Times, nor do I have any affiliation with them beyond my bi-weekly column. I am the Managing Editor of [FingerLakes1.com](http://FingerLakes1.com) a digital news publication that serves the entire Finger Lakes region. My contact information is listed below. I would love to chat further, or continue a dialogue via email.**

Again, I appreciate your time – and will certainly take you up on your offer to work with you to bring important news to light. I will take on any issues that can be fully-substantiated and I look forward to exploring the content you sent me. I'll also link you below to the publications I work with, and my roles with each:

[FingerLakes1.com](http://FingerLakes1.com) — Managing Editor

[Finger Lakes Times](http://FingerLakesTimes.com) — *Bi-Weekly Columnist*, author of 'In Focus'

[FLX Politics](http://FLXPolitics.com) — Co-founder, author

Please also note that [FingerLakes1.com](http://FingerLakes1.com) and the Finger Lakes Times — are not affiliated in any way. Moving forward, I would like to work with you on covering specific news-related issues at [FingerLakes1.com](http://FingerLakes1.com).

Sincerely,

**Josh Durso | Managing Editor**

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