

## CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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*Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator*

BY FAX: 212-643-7831 (8 pages)

April 12, 2000

Mr. Juan Gonzalez/Daily News

RE: Proposed Columns for LAW DAY – MAY 1st

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

Law Day – May 1<sup>st</sup> – would be a particularly appropriate occasion for you to resume your three-part series on appointive judgeships. That is the day when judges and the legal establishment pat themselves on the back – joined by the highest politicians, among them Governor Pataki and Attorney General Spitzer.

You have a gold-mine of *primary source* materials to expose the Governor's corruption of the judicial appointments process to the lower state courts and to the Court of Appeals – which has been the subject of detailed and documented ethics and criminal complaints which CJA has filed with the NYS Ethics Commission and the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. Copies of these fact-specific complaints, dated March 26, 1999 and September 7, 1999, were among the materials I dropped off for you on February 25<sup>th</sup> – and inventoried in a February 28<sup>th</sup> letter to you. For your convenience, a copy of the February 28<sup>th</sup> letter is enclosed.

As of this date – more than a year since CJA's March 26, 1999 ethics complaint was filed with the New York State Ethics Commission – the Ethics Commission continues to "sit" on it – with *no* investigation and *no* disposition.

Likewise, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York has been "sitting" on CJA's September 7, 1999 criminal complaint – with *no* investigation and *no* disposition.

As a result of their inaction – as well as the inaction of everyone else in leadership positions – Chief Judge Judith Kaye, Attorney General Spitzer, and bar presidents among them – the public continues to be unlawfully deprived of the screening committee reports of the qualifications of the Governor's judicial appointees', to which it is absolutely entitled under the Governor's *own* Executive Orders #10 and #11. Despite CJA's repeated requests, not a single report has been released. Meanwhile, the Governor is, inexplicably, maintaining Court of Claims "holdovers" on the bench – such

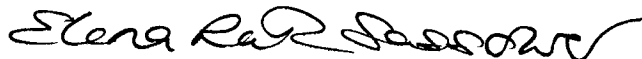
as William Wetzel, his former law partner and friend – more than nine months after expiration of his term – and, later this year, the Governor will be making his third judicial appointment to the Court of Appeals.

Based on our lengthy telephone conversation in January – during which I imparted to you a wealth of invaluable information about the mechanics of the judicial appointment and confirmation processes of which you were unaware – as well as the evidentiary materials which I transmitted to you in February, I would have expected that you would have long ago arranged to interview me about the “paper trail” that CJA has built over the past decade, exposing, *inter alia*, the charade of what is touted as “merit selection”.

I am grateful to your colleague, Larry Cohler, who met with me last week to explore the possibility of an investigative expose on the NYS Commission on Judicial Conduct. Enclosed is a copy of my letter to him of today’s date. Please share with him the materials I supplied you – particularly if you are not using them.

Hopefully, I will hear from you in the near future about resuming your important judges series.

Yours for a quality judiciary,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

Enclosures

cc: Larry Cohler [by fax: 212-643-7831]