

CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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Box 69, Gedney Station
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By Priority Mail

August 19, 1996

COMMON CAUSE
1250 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
6th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036

ATT: Edwin Davis, Lobbyist

RE: Coalition for non-partisan reform

Dear Ed:

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me last week about CJA's effort to build a coalition of organizations to advance non-partisan recommendations to reform the sham and undemocratic process by which the Senate confirms our life-time federal judges.

Ten years ago, Common Cause described this disgraceful process in its study, Assembly-Line Approval: A Common Cause Study of Senate Confirmation of Federal Judges. Unfortunately, the situation remains pretty much the same. Indeed, virtually nothing has come of the straight-forward and easily-implemented recommendations for change which Common Cause proposed as part of its report.

It is CJA's intention to resurrect Common Cause's invaluable report--as timely today as it was ten years ago--and to make its important recommendations a starting point for consensus and concerted action by organizations of all political and ideological stripes. This includes Free Congress Foundation, on the right, and Alliance for Justice, on the left.

As discussed, we would be interested in knowing what Common Cause has done to advance those recommendations--including whether Common Cause ever forged a coalition of organizations as we are now seeking to do.

We hope that Common Cause will subscribe to our coalition strategy and enthusiastically "join the team". A copy of CJA's informational brochure--reflecting our commitment to citizen action and non-partisan reform--is enclosed.

August 19, 1996

To assist Common Cause in recognizing how absolutely dire the present situation is, I enclose our unanswered June 28, 1996 letter to Chairman Hatch--copies of which were sent to the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders. I particularly draw your attention to Exhibit "F" thereto--our May 27th letter to Chairman Hatch, behind which is our October 31, 1995 letter to the ABA relative to Lawrence Kahn's politically-motivated on-the-bench misconduct as a New York State judge.

Also enclosed are all of the documents which our May 27th letter transmitted to Chairman Hatch. These include our 1992 Critique of the pre-nomination screening process and supporting Compendium, as well as three Correspondence Compendia relating to the Critique.

These documents, substantiating our May 27th letter, were in the possession of Chairman Hatch when, by letter dated June 12th, he peremptorily denied us the opportunity to testify at Lawrence Kahn's confirmation hearing. (See Exhibit "G" to our June 28th letter, as well as our response thereto, Exhibit "H").

Finally, I enclose a "hard copy" of our August 13th letter to Nan Aron of Alliance for Justice, annexing Common Cause's 1986 recommendations, as well as those from 1988 of the Twentieth Century Fund. The exact letter was also sent to Mike Pendleton of Free Congress Foundation and a similar letter went to American Judicature Society.

We look forward to hearing from Common Cause and developing a cooperative working relationship. As I mentioned, this is what we attempted years ago in our contacts with Peter Levine in 1992 and with Rick Thomas in 1993.

Yours for a quality judiciary,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.

Enclosures:

- (1) CJA brochure
- (2) 6/28/96 ltr to Chairman Hatch
- (3) 1992 Critique with Compendium of Exhibits
- (4) 3 Correspondence Compendia
- (5) 8/13/96 ltr to Nan Aron