



Sassower Support in Question

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Judicial reform advocate Elena Sassower, found guilty in April of disrupting a 2003 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, is seeking Congressional support as she looks to overturn her conviction. But it appears some of her support is on shaky ground.

A press release issued Wednesday by the New York-based Center for Judicial Accountability, which Sassower heads, states that both Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) and D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) oppose Sassower's incarceration and demand her release from prison pending an appeal.

But a Waters spokesman expressed surprise over the statement, stating: "No, the Congresswoman is not involved in this case at all."

Although spokesman Keith Davis acknowledged the lawmaker's office has received several telephone calls from Sassower's representatives, he said his boss has not made contact with the New York native.

CJA spokesman Miles Ehrenkranz responded that Waters has expressed support for the case, citing statements the lawmaker made at a late-June conference of the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now in San Francisco. Ehrenkranz offered a tape of the conference as proof.

Ehrenkranz acknowledged that the group has not received a formal statement from the lawmaker, but said it is pursuing one.

A Norton aide did not return a message seeking comment.

Sassower, currently serving out her six-month sentence in the D.C. Jail, is appealing the April ruling in the D.C. Court of Appeals.

That court recently denied a request from Sassower to stay her jail sentence during the appeals process, Ehrenkranz noted. Sassower plans to file a motion to reconsider that request.

At a June sentencing hearing, Sassower snubbed a probation offer put forth by D.C. Superior Court Judge Brian Holeman that would have required her to write letters of apology to Senate officials, attend anger management counseling and perform community service. The offer included a suspended sentence, but it would have barred her from the Capitol grounds for two years.

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