



Protester Sentenced

July 7, 2004

Judicial reform advocate Elena Sassower, who was found guilty in April of disrupting a May 2003 Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, was sentenced to six months in jail last week after refusing to accept conditions set forth by a D.C. Superior Court that would have allowed her to avoid jail time.

After Sassower snubbed Judge Brian Holeman's probation offer, she received the maximum six-month sentence — double the amount of jail time Holeman was offering to suspend in her case.

While even the prosecution had recommended that Sassower, co-founder of the White Plains, N.Y.-based Center for Judicial Accountability, serve no jail time, Sassower flatly rejected Holeman's probation plan, which would have forced her to write letters of apology to Senate officials, attend anger management counseling and perform community service.

Sassower has frequently contended that she acted within her First Amendment rights when she attempted to speak out against the appointment of New York Judge Richard Wesley to the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in May 2003. And Sassower, who has frequently sparred with Holeman, filed a motion before her April trial to have the judge removed from her case.

The Center for Judicial Accountability is calling the sentencing "bogus" and has started a fundraising drive to support a national protest to free Sassower from jail.

— **John McArdle**

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