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BY FAX: 202-293-2711 14 pages

February 2, 1999

Ruth Conniff, Washington Editor
The Progressive
Washington, D.C.

RE: Media-Unreported Impeachment Stories

Dear Ms. Conniff:

As discussed, impeachment will NOT be over just because the Senate may end its proceedings against the President in the coming weeks. The House Judiciary Committee has hundreds of federal impeachment complaints, filed by ordinary citizens, including a November 6, 1998 impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Rehnquist which meets "the most stringent definition of impeachable offenses".

Enclosed are CJA's two updated press releases, "House Judiciary Committee Ignores and Conceals Hundreds of Judicial Impeachment Complaints" and "Impeachment Complaint against Chief Justice Rehnquist". Despite our considerable efforts to attract the media to these stories, whose relevance to the unfolding events in which the House Judiciary Committee and the Chief Justice have been the MAJOR players could not have been more direct, the ONLY "reporting" has been in the Village Voice -- in a column so distorted and vague as to require me to write a Letter to the Editor. Copies of both the column and the expurgated published Letter are enclosed.

The Progressive could distinguish itself by coverage of these stories -- and there are innumerable "angles" for presenting them. It could, for example, write about how the media, crawling over the House Judiciary Committee since last September, NEVER explored the obvious question as to how the Committee discharges its *other* impeachment duties, i.e., relating to federal judges -- and how the media then ignored and concealed the scandalous story of the House Judiciary Committee's misfeasance, when we provided it with that *readily-verifiable* information¹. It could also write a story heralding the power of citizen action -- as reflected by CJA's accomplishment in documenting, over a period of many years, the House Judiciary Committee's betrayal of the public interest and in singlehandedly exposing as

¹ For such purpose, I would gladly provide you with a long list of media contacted, including copies of the faxed and mailed correspondence reflecting my conversations with the journalists who have been covering the President's impeachment and/or the U.S. Supreme Court.

methodologically flawed and dishonest the 1993 Report of the National Commission on Judicial Discipline and Removal. As discussed the National Commission was Congress' panicked response to the three judicial impeachments in the 1980's -- a \$1,000,000 expense borne by taxpayers.

Per your request, enclosed are relevant pages from the 1993 Report of the National Commission on Judicial Discipline and Removal about the House Judiciary Committee. Page 35 identifies that the House Judiciary Committee tabulates the number of judicial impeachment complaints it receives in its "Summary of Activities" and that these are "available upon request". Page 37 contains the pertinent recommendation:

"that the House ensure that its Committee on the Judiciary has the resources to deal with judicial discipline matters, and the resources and institutional memory necessary to deal with impeachment cases as they arise."

Also enclosed are pages 38-39 of the National Commission's Draft Report, containing the statement, thereafter omitted from the Final Report:

"The Commission's analysis showed that well over 90 percent of the complaints do not raise genuine issues pertinent to judicial discipline or impeachment. A small number of complaints, however, raise troubling issues..." (at p. 39)

This statement from the Draft Report was made the subject of express inquiry by CJA -- at the outset of our FIVE-YEAR correspondence with the House Judiciary Committee -- as we endeavored to ascertain what the Committee had done with this less than 10 percent that raised "genuine issues pertinent to judicial discipline or impeachment". As reflected by our correspondence, the Committee did NOT respond to our 1993 inquiry -- much as it failed to provide us access to its archived complaints, which we requested in 1995 -- and took no steps to obtain adequate resources to address issues of judicial discipline and impeachment, despite the fact that we brought to its attention the Commission's recommendation on the subject. [See discussion in "*Without Merit: The Empty Promise of Judicial Discipline*", available on our website: www.judgewidth.org]

AGAIN, the story about how the House Judiciary Committee ignores without investigation, referral or acknowledgement the hundreds of impeachment complaints it receives, like the story of CJA's impeachment complaint against Chief Justice Rehnquist², is FULLY-DOCUMENTED and READILY-VERIFIABLE. Neither story requires "heavy-lifting" -- which we have already done. What is needed for the media to follow through by reporting on that documentation, showing that the public is unprotected against the most heinous depredations of federal judges because checks on such federal

² The Commission believed that "any publicly-made (non-frivolous) allegation of serious misconduct...against a Supreme Court Justice would receive intense scrutiny in the press..." (at p. 122).

Ms. Ruth Conniff

Page Three

February 2, 1999

judicial misconduct in ALL three branches of our government are nonfunctional and corrupted. Without media reporting, this dangerous situation will continue.

Yours for a quality judiciary,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elena Ruth Sassower". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

Enclosures