

## CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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*Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator*

### BY HAND

February 1, 2001

National Lawyers Guild  
New York Chapter  
126 University Place  
New York, New York 10003-4538

RE: *Amicus* and other assistance in the appeal of the public interest Article 78 proceeding, *Elena Ruth Sassower, Coordinator of the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc., acting pro bono publico, against Commission on Judicial Conduct of the State of New York* (NY Co. #108551/99; Appellate Division, First Dept. Cal #2000-5434)

The Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) is a non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization, focusing on issues of judicial selection and discipline. Richard Bernstein, Esq., a long-time member of CJA's Board of Directors, is a regional vice-president of the National Lawyers Guild.

This is to request *amicus* and other assistance from the National Lawyers Guild in the above-entitled public interest appeal against the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct, sued for corruption.

As you will see from the enclosed Appellant's Brief and Appendix, this appeal not only underscores the *sine qua non* of judicial independence: a fair and impartial tribunal, free of such external considerations as a complete lack of judicial tenure<sup>1</sup>, but does so in the context of a case whose object is to vindicate the public's right to an effective state judicial disciplinary mechanism.

Examination of the Brief will convince you that the Commission has NO legitimate defense to this appeal – and that the *only* way it can survive the evidence of its corruption, established by the record of the Article 78 proceeding, is if the Appellate Division, First Department replicates the lower court's subversion of judicial independence by fashioning a factually fabricated, legally insupportable decision.

<sup>1</sup> See Brief, pp. 27, 46-48.

The involvement of the National Lawyers Guild will ensure that this politically-explosive appeal, whose criminal ramifications reach to the Governor, is decided as it should be: *on the facts and the law*. This is what judicial independence is all about. The Guild's ability to build a coalition of organizational support and to garner media coverage for the important issues of governmental integrity this appeal presents will make it more difficult for the Appellate Division to "throw" the appeal by a fraudulent judicial decision – as it did last November in deciding another appeal involving the Commission, *Michael Mantell v. New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct* (NY Co. #108655/99, Appellate Division, First Dept. Cal. #2000-3833)<sup>2</sup>.

A copy of the Appellate Division's decision in *Mantell v. Commission*, as reported by the November 20, 2000 New York Law Journal, is enclosed, annexed to CJA's December 1, 2000 memorandum to the Commission and its attorney, the State Attorney General, calling upon them to move to vacate that decision for fraud.

The status of the instant appeal is that the Attorney General requested additional time to respond to my Appellant's Brief. The January 11th stipulation I signed, giving the Attorney General until March 23rd and myself until April 27th, puts the appeal over to the June term. A copy of the stipulation is enclosed. Also enclosed is my January 10<sup>th</sup> letter to Attorney General Spitzer, calling upon him to disavow his representation of the Commission and to join in support of the appeal and in a motion to ensure that it is heard by a fair and impartial tribunal. Additionally, enclosed is my January 11<sup>th</sup> letter transmitting my faxed signature on the stipulation.

Should you wish to see the lower court record in the appeal -- encompassing the lower court record in *Mantell v. Commission* -- or the appellate papers in *Mantell v. Commission*, including my dispositive motion to intervene therein -- I would be pleased to transmit them forthwith.

I look forward to meeting with members of the Guild to discuss the powerful contribution it can make in advancing both judicial independence and accountability by this historic public interest case.

Yours for a quality judiciary,

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

Enclosures:

As indicated, plus CJA's informational brochure  
cc: Richard Bernstein, Esq.

<sup>2</sup> The lower court decision in *Mantell v. Commission* appears at 299-307 of the Appendix, with CJA's analysis thereof appearing at 321-334.