

CENTER *for* JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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5 pages

January 16, 1998

Blair Horner, Legislative Director
NYPIRG
107 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12210

RE: Building a Public Interest Coalition on Judicial Selection/Discipline Issues

Dear Blair:

I tried to reach you by phone earlier today, but your answering system did not pick up after I dialed the number which was indicated by the recorded message for reaching you (I believe it was "3").

This is to remind you to please make time in your busy schedule to review the correspondence you duplicated at the Capitol on Tuesday, January 13th, when we spoke. This includes: (1) CJA's 1/9/98 letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee; (2) CJA's 1/7/98 letter to Chief Judge Judith Kaye; (3) CJA's 12/29/97 letter to the State Judicial Screening Committee; (4) CJA's 12/26/97 letter to Andrew O'Rourke; and (5) CJA's 12/23/97 letter to James McGuire (Governor Pataki's counsel). You also copied CJA's June 2, 1997 letter to Governor Pataki, to which both NYPIRG and Common Cause were indicated recipients. As discussed, we had *no* response from either organization to that letter, notwithstanding it had been sent under a coverletter which emphasized the need for response. A copy of that coverletter, dated June 12, 1997 is faxed herewith.

We must develop an effective strategy for exposing what has been going on during Governor Pataki's administration: the complete exclusion of the public from the processes of judicial appointment and confirmation -- and the utter failure of the Governor and Senators to respect cognizable and *expressly-required* procedures, so intent are they on using state judgeships for patronage and other deal-making purposes. Likewise, we must develop a strategy for responding to the press on these issues. Despite the publicity that NYPIRG and Common Cause have each received this week in Gannett and The New York Times concerning Mr. O'Rourke's purchasing of his office furniture, the fact is that those newspapers have each shamelessly used your organizations' involvement on this issue -- which it appears that Gannett itself elicited -- to camouflage their suppression of coverage of the serious issues reflected by our above correspondence -- which each of them received and which was the subject of continual and urgent requests by us for coverage throughout the past many weeks.

January 16, 1998

Since CJA works exclusively on judicial selection and discipline issues and neither NYPIRG nor Common Cause have any "unit" devoted to them, it would make a great deal of sense for NYPIRG and COMMON CAUSE to work in coalition with CJA on these issues. The correspondence in your possession is a fine example of CJA's work-product -- surely meeting standards of professionalism and precision on which NYPIRG and Common Cause could confidently rely. All of CJA's work product is available for inspection -- and, needless to say, we would be pleased and proud to show it to you and those at NYPIRG and Common Cause who would make such a decision about building a coalition..

Please see about arranging a meeting, ASAP. Since NYPIRG already has a working relationship with Common Cause, we would appreciate if you would also discuss this proposal with Common Cause.

Regards.

Yours for a quality judiciary
And good government,



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

Enclosure: CJA's 6/12/97 letter