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Letter to the Editor by Elena Ruth Sassower

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PORTRAYAL IN NEWS ITEM FOUND "DENIGRATING"

Last month, an important case in which I was the criminal defendant went to trial in Washington. At issue was what took place at the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee's May 22, 2003 public hearing to confirm President George Bush's nomination of New York Court of Appeals Judge Richard C. Wesley to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Although a lengthy front-page article appeared in Legal Times, owned by the same parent company as owns the New York Law Journal, the Law Journal did not run it. Instead, it ran a scurrilous front-page "News in Brief" item, "Sassower Faces Charges of Disrupting Congress" (April 12), whose most false and defamatory assertion is directly refuted by the Legal Times article.

According to the Law Journal item, I both "spoke out" and "was arrested for attempting to speak during the confirmation hearing without being invited to do so". It then continues "She contends she simply wanted to speak her mind...".

No sane professional would "contend[] she simply wanted to speak her mind" – a portrayal reinforcing the item's denigrating opening description that I have "made a career of challenging alleged corruption in New York courts". The inference is that I am pursuing, in an individual capacity, "alleged" corruption that may be only "in my mind".

Conspicuously omitted – as likewise from the front-page "News in Brief" item, "Sassower Found Guilty of Disrupting Congress" (April 21) – are my professional title and organizational affiliation. No editorializing was needed for the Law Journal to plainly state that I am coordinator and co-founder of the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) – a national, non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization.

For more than a decade, CJA has been documenting the dysfunction, politicization, and corruption of the closed-door processes of judicial selection and discipline by advocacy that is scrupulously evidence-based. Indeed, upon Mr. Bush's nomination of Judge Wesley, I personally prepared a fact-specific March 26, 2003 written statement particularizing the case-file evidence establishing Judge Wesley's corruption on the New

York Court of Appeals in two major public interest cases, resulting in vast, irreparable injury to the People of New York. I then hand-delivered this statement – including the substantiating case-file documents -- to the American Bar Association and Association of the Bar of the City of New York, to Senators Schumer and Clinton, and to the Senate Judiciary Committee. None made any findings of fact and conclusions of law with respect thereto. Nor did they – or Judge Wesley, to whom I sent a copy of the statement -- ever deny or dispute its accuracy in any respect.

As to what I “contend” I said and did at the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, the Legal Times got it right:

“According to Sassower, she read from a prepared statement: ‘Mr. Chairman, there’s citizen opposition to Judge Wesley based on his documented corruption as a New York Court of Appeals judge. May I testify?’”

Judge Wesley’s “documented corruption” – covered up by the bar associations, Senators Schumer, Clinton, and the Senate Judiciary Committee, among others – is a major political scandal, yet to be reported. Its explosive ramifications would rightfully derail Senator Schumer’s re-election campaign and Senator Clinton’s talked-about future candidacy for president. Fortunately, readers do not have to rely on the Law Journal, but can verify this for themselves. The substantiating primary source documents – including the unrefuted and irrefutable March 26, 2003 statement – are posted on the homepage of CJA’s Web site, www.judgewatch.org, under the heading “Paper Trail Documenting the Corruption of Federal Judicial Selection/Confirmation and the ‘Disruption of Congress’ Case it Spawned”.

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