

From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2024 12:20 PM
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Subject: **Your Reporting on the NYS Budget, the Judicial Pay Raises, & the 2024 Elections for ALL 213 Legislative Seats, starting with Temporary Senate President Stewart-Cousins & Assembly Speaker Heastie**

Chris Bragg/New York Focus

My below e-mail sent at 10:26 this morning, intended for you as the New York Focus reporter listed on the LCA roster, came back as undeliverable because I mistyped your listed e-mail address as "editor@nyfocus.com", instead of "editor@nysfocus.com". Likewise, my March 21st e-mail beneath it, intended for you. Apologies.

From the New York Focus webpage for its "Team", I see that you are its "Albany Bureau Chief". Am I correct that you have written NO articles for New York Focus about the Commission on Legislative, Judicial and Executive Compensation and the judicial pay raises? And were you part of the referred-to "New York Focus team" whose March 15th article "Your Guide to the 2024 State Budget Fight – We read the governor’s, Senate’s, and Assembly’s budget proposals – so you don’t have to" fails to identify "ANYTHING irregular, let alone unlawful and unconstitutional, about the NYS budget" – including as to the "notoriously murky...largely secret" "process".

So that no time is wasted in your forwarding this e-mail to relevant "Team" members for supervisory and remedial action, consistent with New York Focus' stated mission of publishing "in-depth journalism that explains how the state really works", I am herewith cc'ing them. This includes "Team" member "Senior Reporter" Sam Mellins, author of New York Focus' March 11th article "How the New York State Budget Is Made: We answer your questions on the state’s notoriously opaque budget process", also failing to identify ANYTHING "unlawful and unconstitutional, about the NYS budget" and, in that sense, ANYTHING "irregular".

Thank you.

Elena Sassower, Director
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From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
Sent: Sunday, March 24, 2024 10:26 AM

To: 'blee@alm.com' <blee@alm.com>; 'susan.arbetter@charter.com' <susan.arbetter@charter.com>; 'grace.ashford@nytimes.com' <grace.ashford@nytimes.com>; 'editor@nyfocus.com' <editor@nyfocus.com>; 'molly.burke@hearst.com' <molly.burke@hearst.com>; 'jcampbell@nypublicradio.org' <jcampbell@nypublicradio.org>; 'Dan.Clark@timesunion.com' <Dan.Clark@timesunion.com>; 'Keshia.clukey@newsday.com' <Keshia.clukey@newsday.com>; 'gwen@adirondackexplorer.org' <gwen@adirondackexplorer.org>; 'jdeline@news10.com' <jdeline@news10.com>; 'SDestra@wmht.com' <SDestra@wmht.com>; 'kdewitt@wxxi.org' <kdewitt@wxxi.org>; 'luis.ferre@nytimes.com' <luis.ferre@nytimes.com>; 'news@cbs6albany.com' <news@cbs6albany.com>; 'mfrench@politico.com' <mfrench@politico.com>; 'vgolden@nypost.com' <vgolden@nypost.com>; 'michael.gormley@newsday.com' <michael.gormley@newsday.com>; 'Kyle Hughes' <khughes@nysnys.com>; 'Hupfl.a@gmail.com' <Hupfl.a@gmail.com>; 'aizaguirre@ap.org' <aizaguirre@ap.org>; 'RKarlin@TimesUnion.com' <RKarlin@TimesUnion.com>; 'mzkhan@ap.org' <mzkhan@ap.org>; 'shaneking@statewatch.com' <shaneking@statewatch.com>; 'ekline@lillybroadcasting.com' <ekline@lillybroadcasting.com>; 'editor@cityandstateny.com' <editor@cityandstateny.com>; 'Kate.Lisa@charter.com' <Kate.Lisa@charter.com>; 'David.lombardo@wcny.org' <David.lombardo@wcny.org>; 'seamus.lyman@charter.com' <seamus.lyman@charter.com>; 'BLyons@TimesUnion.com' <BLyons@TimesUnion.com>; 'billmahoney@politico.com' <billmahoney@politico.com>; 'matthew.mirro@statewatch.com' <matthew.mirro@statewatch.com>; 'bphillip@nysenate.gov' <bphillip@nysenate.gov>; 'mikep@statewatch.com' <mikep@statewatch.com>; 'nreisman@politico.com' <nreisman@politico.com>; 'jay.root@nytimes.com' <jay.root@nytimes.com>; 'yancey.roy@newsday.com' <yancey.roy@newsday.com>; 'Joshua.Solomon@timesunion.com' <Joshua.Solomon@timesunion.com>; 'jspector@politico.com' <jspector@politico.com>; 'Maryfrancis.Stoute@charter.com' <Maryfrancis.Stoute@charter.com>; 'jimmy.vielkind@wsj.com' <jimmy.vielkind@wsj.com>; 'Peter.Wendler@wcny.org' <Peter.Wendler@wcny.org>; 'zwilliams@bloombergindustry.com' <zwilliams@bloombergindustry.com>; 'timothy.p.williams@charter.com' <timothy.p.williams@charter.com>

Subject: Your Reporting on the NYS Budget, the Judicial Pay Raises, & the 2024 Elections for ALL 213 Legislative Seats, starting with Temporary Senate President Stewart-Cousins & Assembly Speaker Heastie

TO: [Albany Legislative Correspondents Association Reporters](#)

Your reporting does NOT reveal ANYTHING irregular, let alone unlawful and unconstitutional, about the NYS budget. Nor about the judicial pay raises scheduled to take effect April 1st. Why is that?

Did you not examine [CJA's just-commenced lawsuit](#) I sent you, three days ago, by the below, setting forth the law and facts as to the judicial pay raises and the budget – and suing the Commission on Legislative, Judicial and Executive Compensation, the Governor, Lt. Governor, the Chief Judge, the Chief Administrative Judge, ALL Legislators, the Attorney General, and the Comptroller for violating their duties with respect thereto.

Will you be reporting on the lawsuit – and, if not, why not?

And do you contest the lawsuit's relevance to this year's unfolding elections for all 213 legislative seats – starting with the seats held by Temporary Senate President Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie, who are the named legislative respondents/defendants. The petitioning period for citizens to

challenge them ENDS in less than ten days, but, to date, your reporting of their corruption in office has been ZERO. So, too, the petitioning period ENDS in less than ten days for challenging the other re-election-seeking legislative incumbents, whose corruption, in office, has also garnered ZERO reporting by you.

AS TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE, please forward this e-mail to your editors/publishers, *without delay*, so that they can be fully alerted to the situation – and their First Amendment responsibilities.

I am available to answer questions, no matter how early or late.

Thank you.

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From: Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA) <elena@judgewatch.org>
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Subject: Today, at 3pm, in Albany Supreme Court -- oral argument for TRO to stay "force of law" judicial pay raise report from taking effect April 1st & disbursement of \$34.6M for the judicial pay raises

[TO: Albany Legislative Correspondents Association Reporters – starting with New York Law Journal Reporter Brian Lee](#)

Oral argument is being held today, at 3 pm, in Albany Supreme Court (Justice Christina Ryba), for a TRO to stay the “force of law” Dec 4, 2023 Report of the (3rd) Commission on Legislative, Judicial & Executive Compensation from taking effect, on April 1, 2024, giving pay raises to judges – and enjoining disbursement of the \$34.M appropriated for it in the legislative budget.

The lawsuit, brought by the non-partisan, non-profit citizens organization, Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA), “on behalf of the People of the State of New York & the Public Interest”, is based on CJA’s January 18, 2024 Opposition Report, analyzing the Commission’s Report, line-by-line, and demonstrating it to be a “false instrument”, violating the express requirements for pay raise recommendations – and knowingly so.

It sues the Commission and the Governor Hochul, Lt. Governor Delgado, Chief Judge Wilson, Chief Administrative Judge Zayas, Temporary Senate President Stewart-Cousins, the Senate, Assembly Speaker Heastie, the Assembly, Attorney General James, and Comptroller DiNapoli, all of whom have had CJA’s Opposition Report for more than two months, have not denied or disputed its accuracy in any respect – nor their duty with respect thereto – but have taken no remedial steps.

Here’s the NYSCEF docket for the case, [#902654-24](#). The proposed OSC for a TRO for Justice Ryba to sign today is [#18](#). The short verified petition/complaint is [#1](#), and CJA’s January 18, 2024 Opposition Report is [#6](#).

I will be at Albany Supreme Court for the oral argument, notwithstanding it will be held, electronically, *via* TEAMS. I am reachable by cell, 646-220-7987.

Thank you.

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