

# CENTER *for* JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.

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White Plains, New York 10605

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Dear Friend:

Thank you for your interest in the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. We are building a national citizens' organization focused on the problem of bad judges -- judges who are incompetent, dishonest or both. Dishonesty means judges who knowingly disregard their ethical duties, disobey clear and controlling law, and who write decisions which fabricate or deliberately omit critical facts.

By such incompetence and misconduct, these judges destroy individual lives, families, and businesses and, for ulterior reasons, torpedo important cases in which the public has a vital interest.

The financial cost of appealing a judge's bad decision puts appeal out of reach for the average citizen. Yet those who make the financial sacrifice and undertake appeal are often met with the same realities on the appellate court level as in the lower court.

Incompetent and corrupt judges create havoc at the trial level and overload the system with appeals. This puts the judicial system in crisis and is extremely costly to taxpayers.

Obviously, improving the way we choose our judges is pivotal. We need judges of the highest competence, integrity, and judicial temperament. The origin of the Center is rooted in this issue. We started in 1989 as a local citizens' group challenging the manipulation of judicial elections by party bosses in the Ninth Judicial District of New York, just north of New York City. Called the Ninth Judicial Committee, the group spearheaded the landmark Election Law case discussed in an advertisement we ran on the Op-Ed page of the October 26, 1994 *New York Times*. A copy of that ad is enclosed.

Fighting that case, we experienced first-hand the lawlessness of the courts and the indifference and complicity of the other branches of government. We saw how state agencies specifically charged with monitoring elections and judicial conduct dismissed *documented* complaints *without investigation*. We also experienced vicious retaliation for our judicial whistle-blowing, only a fraction of which is described in our *Times* ad. And the media, which is supposed to keep government honest, hasn't considered any of this a story and hasn't let the public know what is going on.

On the national level, the Ninth Judicial Committee documented the failure of the screening process to meaningfully screen candidates for federal judgeships. Here, too, we witnessed the refusal of leaders of government and major bar associations to take corrective steps to protect the public from unfit judicial nominees being confirmed to lifetime positions on the bench. Once again, the press refused to report anything.

When government and the press are not responsive, the people must respond with answers of their own. Our answer -- which we hope you will make yours -- is to develop an organization to expose and document the extent of judicial incompetence and corruption in state and federal courts, and the failure of government and taxpayer-supported public agencies to do anything about it.

It is our intention to use this information to educate and sensitize the media to the enormity of the problem and create a network linking individuals and grassroots groups grappling with these issues, providing models for constructive citizen action. We are also planning to publish a newsletter.

We invite you to be part of this vital effort to keep democracy and the rule of law alive. The success of our endeavor depends on *you*. We take as our motto the words of Franklin D. Roosevelt:

"People acting together as a group can accomplish things  
which no individual acting alone could ever hope to bring about."

We also enclose a copy of our statement of purposes, an action sheet, and a membership form designed to facilitate your participation in the Center in the way you feel most comfortable.

Thank you for your interest in the Center. We look forward to working with you to make essential and long overdue changes happen.

Yours for a quality judiciary,



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER  
Coordinator

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## STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. is a national non-partisan, not-for-profit citizens' action group whose purposes include the following, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation:

- To maximize public participation in the judge-selection process so as to achieve a quality judiciary, free of political influence, chosen on merit;
- To monitor and participate in judge selection processes at local, state and federal levels;
- To expose unethical judicial conduct and ensure that judges, once selected, maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct;
- To require accountability for unethical conduct by judges and officers of the court, and monitor the effectiveness of public agencies charged with enforcement of ethical standards governing judicial conduct;
- To monitor media coverage of judge-selection processes and judicial conduct, encouraging accurate and fair reporting;
- To undertake research and serve as a repository and archive for information relating to the judicial selection process and judicial misconduct;
- To initiate and participate in legal action consonant with the Center's stated goals.