

Speedup sought on challenge of endorsements

By Deborah Pines

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A citizens group has asked an appeals court to fast-track its challenge to the cross-endorsement of judicial candidates by Westchester Democrats and Republicans so it is heard before the Nov. 6 election.

In legal papers, Doris Sassower, attorney for the Ninth Judicial Committee, said the group is entitled to expedited treatment because its case concerns election law. Sassower wants to appeal an Oct. 16 decision by an Albany judge who declined to declare illegal, as she sought, an agreement by the major parties to endorse a bipartisan slate of judicial candidates in seven races over three years.

Claiming the cross-endorsements "disenfranchised" voters, Sassower also wants three cross-endorsed candidates removed from the Nov. 6 ballot.

The major parties have said Sassower's committee lacks standing to challenge internal nominating procedures. They said the cross-endorsements were done to get highly qualified candidates and prevent expensive, unseemly campaigning, especially for incumbent judges.