

A Section, Part II

METRO BRIEFS

NAACP defense fund makes challenge

A national civil rights group has asked to join a local citizens group's continuing challenge to the cross-endorsement of judicial candidates by Westchester Democrats and Republicans.

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. asked permission last week to file legal papers supporting the challenge by the Ninth Judicial Committee in the case of Castracan vs. Colavita.

The civil rights group historically has fought to ensure that minority voters "have an equal opportunity to elect judges to the state court judiciary," the group's leader, Sherrilyn A. Ifill, wrote in seeking court permission to file an amicus brief in the case.

The appeal of a lower-court ruling — which declined to find the cross-endorsements illegal — is set for March 25 before the Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department, in Albany.