

THE REPORTER DISPATCH

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Judicial endorsements ignore judges' victims

Your editorial endorsements of judicial candidates, like your published bar ratings, are unfair and misleading, based on inadequate data. No analysis is made as to whether a judge's decisions conform to law and facts. Neither Gannett nor the bar associations solicit public comment, even from those best able to comment on judicial performance — aggrieved litigants and lawyers representing them — whose lives have often been destroyed by judges who pollute the judicial process with incompetence, outright dishonesty and other abuses.

It was to give voice to this unheard-from constituency of judicial victims that the Center for Judicial Accountability Inc., a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization based in White Plains, was created. Our files — and those of New York's Commission on Judicial Conduct — are filled with thousands of "horror stories" showing that the need for constitutional change in our judicial nomination and discipline processes is of emergency nature.

Simply because a judge has the job does not mean he/she deserves to keep the job — even when their track record in office may include a history of criticized decisions, higher court reversals, judicial misconduct complaints and civil-rights actions against them based on unthinkable constitutional violations.

Example: Supreme Court Justice Aldo Nastasi, whom Gannett endorsed and the Westchester County and Westchester Women's Bar associations rated as "well-qualified" and who, at age 65, wants 14 more years.

Verifiable information from court transcripts, including two cases in which my own office was counsel for one of the parties, reveals official misconduct warranting accountability on Election Day.

— DORIS L. SASSOWER
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(The writer is director and co-founder of the Center for Judicial Accountability Inc.)