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Letters to the Editor
The New York Times

ATT: INELL WILLIS

To the Editor:

RE: "*The Uses of Secrecy*", (column, Nov. 4), Anthony Lewis reminds us that "we rely on judges to keep us on the path of the Constitution." He should have been talking to his Times co-workers. Just the day before, they literally buried the story of Governor Pataki's appointment of Victoria Graffeo to our state's highest court: placing it on the page before the metro section obituaries. Compounding this, they did not flag it on the metro section front-page as being "Inside" or include it in the first section "News Summary". Two days later, there was nothing in the "Week in Review".

Before 1977, this never could have happened. Back then – and for the preceding 130 years – New Yorkers elected judges to its Court of Appeals. That changed because this newspaper, among others, convinced New Yorkers to approve a referendum giving up their sacred electoral right for what was touted as "reform" – "merit selection" appointment.

But this supposed "reform" is, instead, a politicized behind-closed-doors process that fails to adhere to "merit selection" principles, followed by a confirmation "hearing" that is a "rubber stamp" charade. However, even on the Times' back pages you won't read about this. The Times refuses to report on – let alone examine – the corrupted processes that have replaced our right to elect our highest state judges.



ELENA RUTH SASSOWER, Coordinator
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