

# CENTER for JUDICIAL ACCOUNTABILITY, INC.\*

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August 5, 2024

TO: The NEW deans of the Independent Review Committee (IRC)

[SUNY-Buffalo Law School Dean S. Todd Brown](#)

(predecessor Aviva Abramovsky)

[Albany Law School Dean Cinnamon P. Carlarne](#)

(predecessor Alicia Ouellette)

[Brooklyn Law School Dean David D. Meyer](#)

(predecessor Michael T. Cahill)

[Fordham Law School Dean Joseph Landau](#)

(predecessor Matthew Diller)

[Hofstra Law School Dean Jenny Roberts](#)

(predecessor Gail Prudenti)

[St. John's University Law School Dean Jelani Jefferson Exum](#)

(predecessor Michael A. Simons)

[Syracuse University Law School Dean Terence J. Lau](#)

(predecessor Craig M. Boise)

FROM: Elena Sassower, Director  
Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)

RE: Have Your Predecessor Law School Deans & the IRC's Other Law School Deans Apprised You of What Has Been Going On – & of Your Ethical and Civic Responsibilities Going Forward, including with Respect to *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.*?

I am the director and co-founder of the non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization Center for Judicial Accountability (CJA) – and write to alert you to what your predecessor law school deans have presumably not disclosed to you, namely, that the Independent Review Committee (IRC), to which you are now members replacing them, is corrupt and has enabled an unconstitutionally-enacted Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government (COELIG) to purportedly vote to “close”, without investigation, my July 8, 2022 complaint and October 6, 2022 supplement against Attorney General Letitia James for corrupting the judicial process in *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.*, in which COELIG and the IRC deans are directly interested.

You can assess the situation for yourself, as it is documented by a “paper trail” of correspondence that I sent to ALL the IRC deans, from June 12, 2022 to February 7, 2023, posted, contemporaneously, on CJA's website, here: <https://www.judgewidth.org/web-pages/searching-nys/celg/irc-law-school-deans.htm>.

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\* **Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc.** (CJA) is a national, non-partisan, non-profit citizens' organization working to ensure that safeguards are functioning to prevent judges from “throwing” cases by fraudulent decisions, obliterating and falsifying fact and law – and that judicial selection and discipline processes are not, as they presently are, sham “window-dressing”.

This “paper trail” puts the LIE to the IRC’s self-promoting [March 28, 2023 “Summary of Activities”](#) about the integrity of the deans and their vetting procedures, which IRC Chair Crowell reiterated in his testimony, the following day, at COELIG’s March 29, 2023 first annual hearing. Testifying first, Chair Crowell did not remain for the balance of the hearing, held at New York Law School, notwithstanding his closing words, repeated from the “Summary of Activities”, that the IRC would be “watching COELIG’s work with great interest”.

Based on that “great interest”, the IRC deans may be presumed knowledgeable of [my March 29, 2023 written testimony](#), which I read at the hearing – and which [COELIG posted, with the hearing VIDEO, on its website](#) and then included, by a link, in its 2022 Annual Report (at p.29), issued on August 28, 2023.

The 2022 Annual Report is a “false instrument” and I so-demonstrated this, including with respect to the IRC and the March 29, 2023 hearing<sup>1</sup>, by my [October 2, 2023 complaint against COELIG’s commissioners, its executive director, general counsel, and other high-ranking staff](#) – simultaneously resubmitting, for COELIG’s formal reconsideration, the July 8, 2022 complaint and October 6, 2022 supplement.

COELIG’s response to this October 2, 2023 complaint and its embodied resubmitted July 8, 2022 complaint was to ignore it, without acknowledgment. This is recited by my [January 12, 2024 affidavit](#) in support of appellate motions in [CJA v. JCOPE, et al.](#) and the related [Cuomo v. COELIG](#) – each case listed in the section “Litigation Matters” of COELIG’s 2022 Annual Report (pp. 58-60) and its [2023 Annual Report](#) (pp. 78-81).

The 2023 Annual Report, which was issued June 24, 2024, is also a “false instrument”, covering up COELIG’s corruption and that of the IRC<sup>2</sup>. Its only redeeming virtue is its reference to the April 22, 2024 oral argument in [CJA v. JCOPE, et al.](#), whose dispositive significance is obvious from the Court’s own [VIDEO](#).

In any event, just as COELIG’s 2022 Annual Report goes beyond 2022 to 2023, so too does its Annual Report go beyond 2023 to 2024. In so doing, COELIG conceals my third complaint to COELIG, my [January 29, 2024 complaint](#), which it has ignored without acknowledgment, while, additionally, withholding production of my reiterated FOIL requests for COELIG’s:

“written procedures/manual for receipt, docketing, acknowledgment, preliminary review, investigation of complaints, notification of disposition to complainants – and reconsideration”.

On July 3, 2024, Governor Hochul announced her (proposed) nomination of James Caras to fill a COELIG vacancy that she had not filled for more than six months. On July 10, 2024, I submitted opposition comment, *via* her web portal. However, as is typical, no one contacted me – and there

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<sup>1</sup> See 2022 Annual Report at pp. 19, 25-26, 29.

<sup>2</sup> See 2023 Annual Report at p. 25 pertaining to the IRC and at pp. 34-36, 38-43 pertaining to the March 29, 2023 public hearing.

has been no announcement of “formal” nomination, either by the Governor or by the IRC. Based on past experience, this means that the IRC is in process of approving Mr. Caras.

My July 10, 2024 opposition comment, sent at 10:30 p.m., *via* the Governor’s website portal, stated:

“250 words is inadequate for this comment concerning Gov. Hochul’s proposed nomination of James Caras to the Commission on Ethics & Lobbying in Government – and all the more so as this electronic portal does not accommodate hyperlinking or attachments. My comment is, therefore, posted with hyperlinked evidence on a webpage I have constructed on the website of the Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc., [www.judgewatch.org](http://www.judgewatch.org), accessible from the top panel Latest News’. The direct link is: <https://www.judgewatch.org/web-pages/searching-nys/celg/caras-james.htm>. I will gladly e-mail the comment to you, if you send me an e-mail address for doing so. I am available to answer question[s] – and would welcome the opportunity to do so under oath. Thank you. Elena Sassower, Director/Center for Judicial Accountability, Inc. (CJA)”.

The referred-to comment, with its substantiating hyperlinks – as posted on CJA’s website, at the indicated <https://www.judgewatch.org/web-pages/searching-nys/celg/caras-james.htm> reads:

“[Governor Hochul’s July 3, 2024 announcement](#) of her proposed nomination of James Caras to the Commission on Ethics and Lobbying in Government states:

‘James Caras served as Special Counsel to the current Speaker of the New York City Council until his retirement in 2023 and as General Counsel and then Special Counsel to the City Council under the prior Speaker.’

Not included in the announcement are the dates of his service in those positions – or his duties, particularly as ‘Special Counsel’.

Had Mr. Caras been doing his job – certainly as General Counsel – he would know that the City Council and its relevant committees are in flagrant violation of the New York City Charter, [Chapter 2, §29](#), requiring oversight ‘on a regular and continuous basis’, including yearly hearings, of ‘the activities of the agencies of the city’. The most important of these ‘agencies’, for purposes of ensuring the integrity of city governance, are the New York City Public Advocate, the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, the New York City Department of Investigation, and New York City’s five district attorneys.

I directly apprised the City Council and its relevant committees of the corruption of these ‘agencies’ in connection with the mayor’s appointment of Milton Williams, Esq. as chair of the Conflicts of Interest Board and Anthony Crowell, Esq. as a member of the New York City Planning Commission. The City Council confirmed both of them on September 14, 2022, following a sham September 7, 2022 hearing of its Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections, of which Speaker Adams is a member and at which she was present, though not for the portion at the end where citizens are permitted to testify for two minutes. No findings of fact or conclusions of law were made with respect to my [evidence-filled written testimony](#) – presumably a responsibility of [the Office of the General Counsel under whose auspices the hearing was held](#).

Below are links to webpages substantiating this comment. In addition to the first pertaining to my testimony at the September 7, 2022 City Council hearing and my correspondence to the City Council and its pertinent committees and members relating thereto, are links to my FOIL requests to the New York City Council, which are [handled through its General Counsel's Office](#). These are, most importantly:

- [my September 8, 2022 FOIL request](#) entitled 'FOIL – Compliance with Chapter 2, §29 of the NYC Charter: NYC Conflicts of Interest Board, NYC Dept of Investigation, NYC's 5 D.A.s, & the Office of the Public Advocate – plus 'allowance[s]' to City Council Committee chairs & officers';
- [my September 13, 2022 FOIL request](#) entitled 'FOIL – Records, Rules & Procedures pertaining to the Sept. 7, 2022 Rules Committee hearing on mayoral appointees &, in particular, Milton Williams, Jr., Esq. & Anthony Crowell, Esq.'.

To the September 8, 2022 FOIL request, there was only a dilatory, insufficient response reflecting the City Council's non-compliance with Chapter 2, §29 of the City Charter. To the September 13, 2022 FOIL request, there was NO response whatever.

Also posted are my FOIL requests to the City Council, from 2021, alerting it to the situation with respect to the Public Advocate, to whom the FOIL requests were also addressed:

- [my May 3, 2021 FOIL request](#) entitled 'Annual Reports of the Public Advocate to the City Council for 2010 to 2020';
- [my May 11, 2021 FOIL request](#) entitled 'Procedures required to be established by the public advocate pursuant to Section 24(g) of the New York City Charter';
- [my May 17, 2021 FOIL & website request](#) entitled 'Section 24 of the New York City Charter & the Public Advocate's Duties'.

All three of these FOIL requests were acknowledged by the City Council's FOIL officer, but the only response thereafter was to the second, deferring to the Public Advocate's palpably deficient, Charter-violating response. As for the Public Advocate's responses to the other two FOIL requests, they also were palpably deficient and violative of Charter requirements.

Suffice to add that as to the third FOIL request pertaining to the Public Advocate's website, the ONLY change thereafter made was to the sentence highlighted by the FOIL request: 'These duties, worded somewhat ambiguously, are laid out in Section 24 of the City Charter.' This was changed to remove the 'worded somewhat ambiguously'. No hyperlinking to [Section 24](#) was added, nor listing of the Public Advocate's duties pursuant thereto, as my FOIL had requested, thereby concealing the Public Advocate's past

violations, which would be continued.

What did Mr. Caras know and what should he have known, consistent with his General Counsel and Special Counsel duties? And what does Mr. Caras believe to be his ethical duties now, upon being furnished with this evidence-substantiated comment, where, additionally, my [September 7, 2022 written testimony against Anthony Crowell \(at pp. 3-6\)](#) and its [two-minute summary](#) exposed not only his corruption in 2015 as a member, if not *de facto* chair, of the JCOPE/LEC review commission, and, in 2021, as a member of the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board, but, since 2022, as chair of the Independent Review Committee (IRC) that will be reviewing the Governor's proposed nomination of Mr. Caras' to COELIG. This, in addition to exposing the corruption of the IRC's 14 other law school deans – all fully knowledgeable, since [my first June 12, 2022 letter](#) to them, of the lawsuit [CJA v. JCOPE, et al. \(Albany Co. #904235-22\)](#), brought 'on behalf of the People of the State of New York & the Public Interest', whose sixth cause of action is dispositive of the unconstitutionality and fraud of the 'ethics commission reform act of 2022' that replaced JCOPE with COELIG.

As [my subsequent correspondence to the 15 IRC deans reveals](#) – and it spans from July 2022 to February 2023 – they have covered-up the wilful failure of COELIG's 'selection members' – the Governor among them – to reject their own proposed nominees based on investigation of adverse comment, and, upon approving these corrupt proposed nominees, have, thereafter, covered up their corruption as COELIG commissioners, as, for instance, their dismissal, without investigation, of COELIG's first complaint, *to wit*, [CJA's July 8, 2022 complaint](#) and [October 6, 2022 supplement](#) against Attorney General Letitia James for corrupting the judicial process in *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.*, rewarded by fraudulent Supreme Court decisions.

As for what has become of CJA's subsequent complaints to COELIG – [CJA's October 2, 2023 complaint](#) and [January 29, 2024 complaint](#), each involving *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.* – COELIG has been 'sitting on' them. As reflected by my most recent [June 5, 2024 e-mail](#) to the COELIG commissioners, COELIG has not even acknowledged receipt of these two fully-documented complaints. Meanwhile, the IRC and COELIG have been defending against two subsequent lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of the 'ethics commission reform act of 2022' – *Lavine v. State of New York...IRC*, defended by [outside counsel, for which the taxpayers have needlessly paid tens of thousands of dollars](#), and *Cuomo v. COELIG* – each lawsuit, as they know, mooted by the sixth cause of action of *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.*

Will Mr. Caras, if approved to be a COELIG commissioner by the IRC deans, have the integrity to 'blow the whistle' on what's been going on?

I am available to answer questions about the foregoing and would welcome the opportunity to do so, under oath.

Thank you.

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**Substantiating EVIDENTIARY WEBPAGES**

[CJA’s Sept 7, 2022 Testimony in Opposition to NYC Council Confirmations of Anthony Crowell & Milton Williams, Etc.](#)

[CJA's 2022 FOIL to NYC Council](#)

[CJA's 2021 FOIL to NYC Council & Public Advocate](#)  
[CJA's complaints & FOIL requests to COELIG](#)

[A Tale of Three Lawsuits](#)

(1) *CJA v. JCOPE, et al*; (2) *Lavine v. NYS...IRC*; (3) *Cuomo v. COELIG*”

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This letter is being simultaneously furnished to IRC’s other law school deans – and to your predecessor deans whose departure from the IRC scene does not relieve them of their ethical and civic responsibilities to staunch the vast injury to the People of the State of New York and constitutional, lawful state governance which, as IRC members, they knowingly and deliberately abetted.

I would be pleased to answer questions as to the foregoing – and to discuss the IRC’s *amicus curiae* submission to the Court of Appeals with respect to *CJA v. JCOPE, et al.*, which I am herewith requesting – in support of an appeal of right on the constitutional questions directly involved or, alternatively, leave to appeal, with the case heard in tandem with *Cuomo v. COELIG*.

Thank you.

s/ELENA RUTH SASSOWER

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cc: New York Law School Dean Anthony Crowell  
Columbia University Law School Dean Gillian Lester  
Cornell University Law School Dean Jens David Ohlin  
Touro College Law School Elena B. Langan  
Yeshiva University Cardozo Law School Dean Melanie Leslie  
New York University Law School Dean Troy McKenzie  
Pace University Law School Dean Horace E. Anderson, Jr.  
CUNY-Queens College Law School Dean Sudha Setty  
Predecessor Deans