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Citizens Move From Capitol Hill To Internet Radio In Examining Judicial Accountability

Summary: A group of six community and business leaders is compiling an assessment of and written report on the “Citizens’ Forum On Judicial Accountability” which took place May 15, 2008 in Washington, D.C. on Capitol Hill. A public awareness campaign has been launched about the CFOJA and the significance of private citizens helping define the scope of judicial accountability in America. Anchoring the multi-media campaign is an internet radio show entitled “Change of Venue”.

Crown Point, Indiana – July 1, 2008: An audience slowly gathered on the morning of May 15, 2008 at the Capitol Hill mansion in Washington, D. C. of the now deceased philanthropist Stewart R. Mott, for an unprecedented “Citizens’ Forum on Judicial Accountability” (CFOJA). As executive director of National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc. (NJCDLP), a co-sponsor of the event, Zena Crenshaw shares her views on the program’s intent. “The forum provided a controlled, but reasonably exciting environment for members of Congress, judges, court administrators, human rights activists, and good government advocates to hear an orchestrated, comprehensive, and rationally sound debate on the proper scope of judicial accountability in America”.

According to Crenshaw, a group of six community and business leaders, including a former Chair of the U. S. Merit System Protection Board, attorney Beth Slavet, is compiling an assessment of and written report on the citizens’ forum with recommendations for judicial oversight in America. Crenshaw acknowledges that the report and recommendations are unlikely to have impact if the general public seems to find them irrelevant. NJCDLP accordingly launched a public awareness campaign about the CFOJA and the significance of private citizens helping define the scope of judicial accountability in America.

Anchoring the multi-media campaign on the CFOJA is an internet radio show to debut at 11:00 a.m. CDT on Monday, July 14, 2008. Crenshaw is to host the show entitled “Change of Venue”. Her co-producer is Andrew D. Jackson, NJCDLP’s Project Coordinator.

Jackson explains “we’ll have a live interview format with varying opportunities for listeners to call-in with questions and comments”. Jackson adds “Zena’s guests will include CFOJA speakers, panelists, and audience members as well subject matter experts from a variety of sources”. In addition to call-ins, “Change of Venue” listeners can communicate with Crenshaw and her guests through a radio blog and occasional, real-time internet chats.

“I want to push our dialogue beyond the ‘judges are dishonest and can’t be trusted to self-regulate / judicial critics are merely disgruntled litigants’ paradigm of popular debates” says Crenshaw. “For example, my first guest, attorney Michael McCray, made excellent arguments for judicial self-policing at the citizens’ forum – but our audience was largely reform minded and his points may not have been savored”. Crenshaw asserts, “we will slow the pace down and revisit all relevant perspectives as often as necessary until my radio show is where you hear fair, balanced discussions about the judiciary”.

“Change of Venue” listeners are encouraged to read backgrounds and transcripts and view videographed statements from the CFOJA at www.njcdlp.org/Forum.html “It should not be hard to distinguish guests and listeners spouting-off from those with informed views” projects Jackson. “Zena is definitely hosting a thinking person’s show, but it won’t be stuffy or pretentious” Jackson claims.

Reportedly a tentative decision has been made to publish an official CFOJA report with recommendations after the new Congress and President take office in January, 2009. Those involved promise steady progress towards completion of the report and to publicize their efforts to some extent in the interim. “As a prelude to the report, Zena may soon host an internet radio and television show” says Jackson.

Details on the CFOJA, Zena Crenshaw, her radio show, and many of her likely guests are accessible at www.njcdlp.org/Change_of_Venue.html A radio player for hearing the show is also available on the web page. It features a link to dial-in instructions for the show.

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*Some of the world's most prominent government whistleblowers and human rights activists gathered during the week of May 11-18, 2008 in Washington, D. C. to lobby Congress and alert the public to the need to support whistleblower protection. Part of the momentous occasion was a historical, **Citizens’ Forum On Judicial Accountability (CFOJA)** which took place on Capitol Hill, Thursday - May 15, 2008. The internet radio show “Change of Venue”, anchors an intense, multi-media, public awareness campaign promoting the importance and practical benefit of the CFOJA report to be completed and presented to the new Congress by January 2009.*