

Good Government Advocates Press To Place Judicial Accountability On The Agenda Of 2008 Presidential Candidates

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Crown Point, IN ([PRWeb](#)) August 20, 2007 -- Rice University of Houston, Texas was the site of what may turn out to be one of the most important civil rights and constitutional liberties conferences in recent history. On August 11, 2007, National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc. (NJCDLP) hosted a free conference at the prestigious university campus to solidify a national grassroots movement for important judicial reforms. The conference title asks the rhetorical question "Silencing of the Lambs?", prompting consideration of whether average Americans truly have a say about the quality of justice dispensed by American courts. Zena Crenshaw, NJCDLP Executive Director, explained that "we begin our analysis with a consideration of how effective average Americans seem to be in holding the gatekeepers of justice accountable for their conduct."

Attending the NJCDLP conference were many good government advocates representing more than a dozen states - Texas, Maryland, Illinois, Indiana, California, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Minnesota, Virginia, District of Columbia, Florida, New Mexico, and Georgia. The gathering summoned the spirit of Washington Whistleblower Week (WWW) which brought scores of activists to Washington, D. C. to protest government waste, fraud, and abuse in May 2007. While strengthening and expanding federal legislation was a key focus of WWW, its participants largely understood that law breakers essentially act with impunity when legal processes and courts are not affordable, reasonably prompt, and fair.

Sheriffs, prosecutors, and judges tacitly aligned to deny the civil and constitutional rights of Blacks among others, even at the height of America's civil rights movement. Attending the NJCDLP conference in Houston were Louisiana's infamous "Jena 6" as well as poor and minority residents of Abilene, Texas who could relate to that problem and saw through conference presentations its potential link to inadequate judicial accountability. Crenshaw reminded the audience that "the halls of justice are supposed to be open in America", noting the "large number of dollars and supporters it (otherwise) takes to access justice when your name is not Scooter Libby." Marcel Reid, a NJCDLP conference presenter and President of the D. C. chapter for ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) added "if there is no justice for the least of us, then there is no justice for the rest of us - Without Justice for All there will be Justice for None." ACORN is the nation's largest community organization of low and moderate income families with over 350,000 member families.

The appointments of Supreme Court Justices Roberts and Alito and recent controversial High Court decisions assure that America's judiciary will be on the agenda of 2008 Presidential candidates. NJCDLP and most who convened with the organization in Houston seek to ensure that appropriate judicial reform and accountability are part of the Presidential debate. Attorney Michael R. McCray, chairman of "The 3.5.7 Commission", confirmed that "an unaccountable and unassailable judiciary is a serious threat to democracy and can literally destroy the American way of life." His newly formed private commission will examine the propriety of summary judgments entered against federal employees under Title VII, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and certain employees seeking relief under the False Claims Act.

Matthew F. Fogg, a high profile government whistleblower presenting at the NJCDLP conference, lauded the event and WWW for uniting patriots who fearlessly combat government corruption. Fogg referenced impending federal legislation, initiated by the D. C. based No FEAR Coalition which he co-chairs. No FEAR II would amend the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 and is presently co-sponsored by U. S. Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee (D-Tx), Albert Wynn (D-Md), and John Lewis (D-Ga). According to Fogg, "No FEAR II closes loopholes hindering enforcement of various antidiscrimination and government whistleblower protection laws." It also harkens to a concern expressed by famed civil rights activist Thomas N. Todd at the NJCDLP conference.

Attorney Thomas N. Todd, widely known for his dynamic oratorical skills as TNT, personally called on House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers, Jr. (D-Mich) to move towards federalizing the regulation of speech among lawyers. In an explosive pre-recorded interview, Todd calls for a complete overhaul of professional disciplinary rules purporting to preserve the sanctity of America's judiciary. He projects that in some communities, lawyers are likely unwilling to accept cases that may place them in "bad standing with the judiciary". This "chilling effect" on a right as fundamental and critical as free speech, particularly troubles Todd when lawyers are called in 2007 to represent "very, very unpopular clients, just as they did in the South". Noting the "consistent" concern about equity and justice of Chairman John Conyers, Todd envisions that relevant hearings before the House Judiciary Committee may lead to a "national (lawyers') commission with one standard" for free speech.

Others riveting the NJCDLP audience at Rice University included attorney Mark A. Adams of Florida; attorney Dale Nathan of Minnesota; Dr. LeRoy Gillam, national president of Southeastern Christian Association; school reform activist Peyton Wolcott; NJCDLP director Thomas Saunders; and attorney Caroline Douglas. Keynote remarks were made by the stately, 2006 congressional candidate Byron De Lear. "Coming from all walks of life and from a diverse set of political affiliations, we all see and feel the urgent necessity for a more representative and fair justice system supporting the principles of equal protection under the law and equality for all" says De Lear.

Participants left the NJCDLP conference, committed to pursue their lofty ideals through practical, effective action. Rodney Logal, a NJCDLP board member and primary benefactor, emphasized that "meaningful government reform will likely come on a grassroots basis through the small financial contributions of many if it is to be afforded at all." Echoing that sentiment and other tenets of grassroots activism, NJCDLP Project Coordinator Andrew D. Jackson announced the formation of "You Can Count On Me". This new commercial venture of NJCDLP is a professionally administered network of organizations and individuals, pledged to provide each other a manageable level of simple, but vital support.

NJCDLP is a nonprofit, grassroots organization combating abuses of the American legal system that are facilitated by judicial misconduct. NJCDLP is also a member of the No FEAR and Make It Safe coalitions which advocate for federal workers, including Title VII claimants and government whistleblowers. For more info on the NJCDLP conference at Rice University, please visit http://www.njcdlp.org/Conference_Recap.html

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http://www.njcdlp.org/Conference_Recap.html

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