

the Legal Reformer

HALT'S MEMBERSHIP NEWSLETTER • April-June 2008

HALT Report Card Blasts Systems for Failing to Hold Judges Accountable

Released on the 50th anniversary of Law Day, HALT's Judicial Accountability Report Card grades all 50 states, D.C. and the federal circuits. HALT gave systems overseeing federal judges a D+. More than half of state programs received marks below C. Mississippi and Maine flunked outright. No state earned an A. Washington state took top honors, but was only graded a B.

"While most judges serve capably from the bench, our systems for judicial accountability unfortunately allow others to regularly abuse their positions of power," stated HALT Senior Counsel Suzanne M. Blonder. "Weak conduct codes permit state and federal judges to rule even when they have a critical conflict of interest in a case. Judicial discipline commissions regularly turn a blind eye to misconduct by making it difficult for citizens to file com-

BEST STATES

1. Washington
2. Connecticut
3. Pennsylvania
4. Arizona
5. California

WORST STATES

51. Mississippi
50. Maine
49. Louisiana
48. District of Columbia
47. Delaware



plaints against judges, concealing data and ultimately refusing to remove or meaningfully sanction even the most incompetent and abusive judges."

HALT's Report Card comes on the heels of new mandatory discipline rules

for federal judges. While the new regulations brought clarity, they failed to add procedures that would have made the system more rigorous, transparent and impartial. HALT's Report Card gave the 13 *Continued on page 2*

Inside This Issue

Legal Reform News	3
Lowering Your Legal Costs	4
Gag Rules Try to Silence Citizens who File Complaints Against Judges	5
Join HALT'S Civil Justice Legacy Society	5
HALT's 2008 Spring Interns	5
An Interview with Mark Britton	6
James C. Turner: State Bar Plan Cuts Access to Affordable Legal Services	7
HALT in the Media	7
From the Mailbox	8

HALT Celebrates 30 Years of Legal Reform

"I don't think you guys have a chance in hell, but I really believe in what you're doing. Best of luck."

So read the note that came with HALT's first ever \$500 contribution back in 1978. HALT founder Paul Hasse remembers the note well among the \$5 and \$10 contributions that poured in from people who had heard about HALT and wanted to support its mission.

"I wish I could meet that early HALT member today to thank him face-to-face and congratulate him on making that 'risky' investment," Hasse recently told

members in a letter commemorating HALT's 30th anniversary.

Over the years, HALT's membership has grown from those first few members to tens of thousands across the country. Despite the entrenched power and deep pockets of the legal establishment,

HALT has won numerous victories. It has armed hundreds of thousands of legal consumers with the tools they need to deal with lawyers and the court system and drawn much needed public and press attention to outrageous lawyer and judicial misconduct. *Continued on page 4*



the Legal Reformer

Theresa Meehan Rudy *Editor*

Christopher McGee *Art Direction*

HALT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Conrad Martin, *Chair*

Fund for Constitutional Government

Danielle Brian

Project on Government Oversight

Katherine S. Broderick

*Dean, UDC David A. Clarke
School of Law*

Louis A. Clark

Government Accountability Project

Catherine Elias Jermany

National Self-Help Law Project

Sally Greenberg

National Consumers League

George A. Miller

George A. Miller Family Fund

HALT STAFF

James C. Turner

Executive Director

Theresa Meehan Rudy

Program Director

Suzanne M. Blonder

Senior Counsel

Patricia Etzell

Development Director

Stacie Branham

Membership Coordinator

Rachel Decker

Program Assistant

Emily Werth

Program Assistant

the Legal Reformer, © 2008, HALT — Simple, Affordable, Accountable, Justice for All. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of HALT. Anyone contributing \$25 or more per year to support HALT will receive *the Legal Reformer* free of charge. Contributions are tax-deductible and should be made payable to HALT.

Members: Please include your address label when submitting address changes.

Postmaster: Send address changes to: HALT, 1612 K Street, NW, Suite 510 Washington, DC 20006

Telephone: (202) 887-8255

Fax: (202) 887-9699

Web site: www.halt.org

E-mail: halt@halt.org

HALT Report Card, Cont. from page 1

federal circuits, which now all operate under the same set of rules, a combined D+ overall. “Surprisingly, our research shows that states oversight of state and local judges is often superior to that of federal judges,” noted Blonder. “Given that federal judges enjoy lifetime appointments, we are troubled by the circuits’ inattention to those who misuse their positions on the bench.”

To produce the Report Card, HALT interviewed judicial conduct administrators, analyzed statistics from the American Judicature Society and the Center for Public Integrity, evaluated judicial conduct Web sites and rules of disciplinary procedure, and studied state and federal statutes that govern judicial financial disclosure and gift receipt. In determining grades, HALT considered the following factors:

Transparency—Unfortunately, the nation’s system of judicial accountability maintains a closed-door structure that evades oversight. The worst jurisdictions in the nation, including Delaware, D.C. and Hawaii, wait until public discipline is ordered by the highest court before officials divulge information about a complaint.

Availability of Meaningful Sanctions—To successfully deter judges from abusing their positions of power and to provide citizens with access to a judge’s complete disciplinary history, all sanctions must be formal and public. Today, only nine states—including Arizona, Iowa, Oregon and Washington state—have eliminated private, closed-door discipline.

Consumer Friendliness—Litigants are often reluctant to bring a judge’s misconduct to the attention of a local judicial discipline body because the rules of many jurisdictions “gag” individuals from disclosing information about an ethics complaint they have filed against a judge. To respect the rights of ordinary citizens, conduct commissions

should allow complainants to speak freely. Unfortunately, 16 states, such as Massachusetts, Ohio and Kentucky, continue to impose gag rules.

Online Outreach—In today’s Internet-driven culture, most individuals look for information online. Shockingly, eight states, including Colorado, Maine, New Jersey and Oklahoma, fail to host a Web site with any information about the judicial discipline process in their states. While these states are the exception to the rule, most jurisdictions provide only meager online resources.

Public Participation—One way to ensure impartiality and to increase public confidence in the judicial oversight system is to include meaningful participation by ordinary citizens, yet judges and lawyers typically dominate judicial conduct commissions. HALT’s research found that 42 states and the federal circuits give ordinary citizens only a token role in the process at best.

Financial Disclosure—To determine whether a judge possesses an economic conflict of interest in a case, citizens should have the right to review annual financial disclosure reports. While most states require annual reporting from judges, Idaho, Montana and Utah have no such regulations, and judges’ reports in Alabama and Georgia are not publicly available.

Gift Restrictions—In need of the most reform, HALT’s study found, are the state and federal ethics rules that allow judges to accept compensation from private groups wishing to influence case rulings. No state in the country or federal circuit places a monetary cap on the compensation and reimbursements that judges may receive for attending privately-funded trips.

To see how well the systems for disciplining state and federal judges perform in your region, as well as HALT’s grading criteria and Report Card media coverage, visit our Web site at www.halt.org. ■



Legal Reform News

WISCONSIN AND HAWAII BACK OFF

Bar-sponsored proposals to broaden the definition of the practice of law in both Hawaii and Wisconsin have been temporarily shelved. Strong opposition to the proposals from HALT, the U.S. Justice Department, legal document preparers, accountants, realtors and businesses took both the Hawaii State Bar Association and the State Bar of Wisconsin by surprise.

In a letter to the Hawaii Supreme Court, Bar President Jeffrey Sia said, "It was not the HSBA's intention or goal to deprive any professional group or any person of their right to conduct and handle matters they legally are entitled to do by law." Both state bars have asked their states' supreme courts for more time to consider the issue.

SOUTH DAKOTA INCREASES SMALL CLAIMS DOLLAR LIMIT

South Dakota Governor Mike Rounds signed small claims legislation on February 19, 2008, that increases South Dakota's dollar limit from \$8,000 to \$12,000. South Dakota now holds the third highest dollar limit in the country.

The bill's sponsor, Representative Richard Engels, said the higher ceiling is needed because many small claims cases exceeded the former \$8,000 limit, requiring people to go to the expense of hiring a lawyer to recover damages in circuit court.

FREE ONLINE LAW LIBRARY

Fastcase, an online subscription law library, has launched the largest free law library in the nation, Public Library of Law—www.plol.org. Bringing many different Web and legal resources together, the new online law offers over 1.8 million pages of federal cases, along with 10 years of cases from all 50 states.

"Just as the Internet has made it possible for people to book their own travel, manage their own investments, and file their own taxes, [Fastcase] will enable individuals to find answers to their routine or small-claims legal questions online—either by themselves or in conjunction with a lawyer," said Phil Rosenthal, President of Fastcase.

WISCONSIN OFFERS NEW SMALL CLAIMS COURT FORMS

Wisconsin recently introduced new court forms to make the small claims court process easier for legal consumers. The forms are accompanied by plain-English instructions and are available both online and in the Clerk of Circuit Court office in each county courthouse. They are expected to be in heavy demand (last year over 170,000 small claims court cases were filed in Wisconsin).

Development of these simplified forms and instruction sheets is part of a broader initiative by the courts to improve access to justice for *pro se* litigants.

MISSOURI ALLOWS LIMITED SCOPE REPRESENTATION

The Missouri Supreme Court has adopted new court rules that allow an

attorney to help a litigant with only a portion of a case while the rest of the case is handled by the litigant himself or by another professional, such as an accountant or a realtor.

The court also adopted new provisions requiring all self-represented family law litigants to complete an awareness program which explores the risks and responsibilities of self-representation and requiring the adoption of approved forms for use by self-represented litigants.

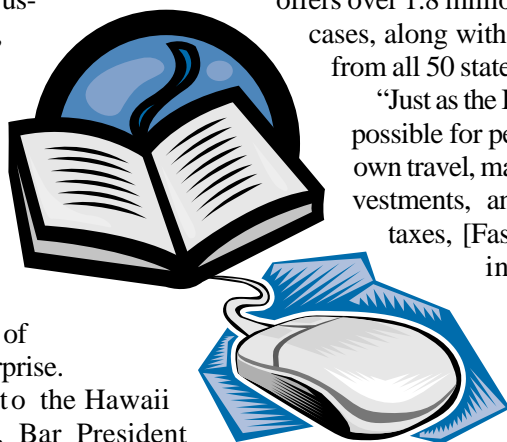
NEW PROTECTION UNDER KANSAS GUARDIANSHIP LAW

On April 9, Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius signed House Bill 2644, which adds additional protection against possible conflicts of interest in guardianship appointments and requires training for those wishing to serve as guardians.

The law requires any person filing a petition to become a guardian or conservator to disclose details of transactions between the proposed ward and the proposed guardian that could be perceived as self-serving and adverse to the best interest of the ward. Guardians must also inform the court if circumstances change that might constitute a conflict of interest.

In addition, restrictions are added for guardians who work for companies that provide care to individuals with similar disabilities to the proposed ward. These caregivers or employees can only be appointed as guardians under certain circumstances. And, starting in 2009, every appointed guardian or conservator in Kansas must promise that he or she has completed a basic instructional program concerning the duties and responsibilities of a guardian or conservator. ■

Compiled by Annie Durkin, Emily Werth
and Rachel Decker



HALT Celebrates, Cont. from page 1

Here are just a few of our highlights from three decades of legal reform.

1978—HALT—Help Abolish Legal Tyranny is founded to serve as the lone voice for America’s legal consumers.

1979—HALT publishes its first Citizens Legal Manual, *Shopping for a Lawyer*, to help consumers take control of their attorney-client relationships right from the start.

1984—Rosemary Furman, a legal secretary and stenographer, is sentenced to 30 days in jail after the Florida State Bar Association prosecutes her for filling out simple legal forms for people who can’t afford the exorbitant fees lawyers charge for the same service. She is only given a reprieve after the governor steps in, but she is barred from providing any future legal services.

1986—HALT hosts its first National Legal Reform Conference.

1996—The Virginia State Bar Association proposes banning nonlawyers from conducting real estate closings even though the practice has been in place in Virginia for nearly 15 years. The Bar Association only backs down when HALT, the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commis-

sion urge them to reject the proposal. **1998**—HALT publishes a first of its kind consumer guide, *Do-It-Yourself Law*, to educate consumers about the growing number of self help kits, books and software programs on the market.

1999—HALT and other consumer advocates intervene after members of the Texas Bar Association get a federal judge to ban the sale or distribution of a software package, Quicken Family Lawyer, because they claim it is a “cyber lawyer” and therefore violates the state’s practice of law rules. The power grab only fails because HALT and other consumer advocates appeal to a higher court and the state legislature.

2002—HALT releases a national Report Card on Small Claims Courts and a national Report Card on Lawyer Discipline.

2003—The Arizona Supreme Court is forced to retreat from an earlier proposal that defined the practice of law far too broadly. The rule is only adopted after they provide an exception for certified legal document preparers.

2003—HALT forces the American Bar Association to back off from its controversial proposal to create a

model definition of the practice of law which would have barred anyone but lawyers from providing any service that even remotely involved a legal question.

2005—HALT and other consumer groups persuade Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign sweeping small claims reform legislation into law that raises the dollar limit, improves the quality of small claims judges and mandates improvements to the small claims advisory system.

2008—The Wisconsin Bar Association attempts to redefine the practice of law to cover every legal service imaginable. HALT steps in and, in comments to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, addresses the current legal accessibility crisis and urges them to reject the state bar association’s proposed rule. The State bar asks the Court for additional time to reconsider the issue.

2008—HALT turns 30!

2008—HALT launches *www.fredrodell.com*—to bring exposure to the critical legal reform thinking and key writings of the late Yale law professor and former HALT Advisory Board member Fred Rodell. The Web site posts Rodell’s out-of-print book, *Woe Unto You Lawyers!* ■

Lowering Your Legal Costs

If a legal situation occurs in your family (your daughter gets a DUI, your family business goes under, or your parents need estate planning help) will you know what to do?

Turning to a traditional lawyer may not be the answer. Today, you have a range of other choices—everything from buying a do-it-yourself law book, to working with an independent paralegal. Knowing your options will make you a better informed user of the legal system and increase your ability to handle legal matters on your own.

If your legal issue is straightforward and uncontested, you can save

thousands of dollars in legal fees by handling the matter yourself. Thanks to today’s sophisticated legal software and innovative Web-based legal document services, a growing number of consumers are choosing to write their own wills, set up small businesses, secure patents and trademarks, rent property and handle a variety of other legal tasks on their own. Those who want more help, but can’t afford to hire a lawyer, are turning to alternative legal service providers such as legal document preparers and independent paralegals.

If you want to work with a lawyer—

because your legal issue is complex, substantial money is involved, or you simply feel more comfortable with full service legal representation—there are specific things you can do to help keep legal costs down, beginning with selecting your attorney carefully, obtaining a written fee agreement in advance and reviewing bills closely.

For other tips on keeping legal costs down with or without a lawyer, download a copy of HALT’s new guide “Lowering Legal Costs” online at *www.halt.org*, or write for a free copy to HALT, 1612 K St. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20006. ■

Gag Rules Try to Silence Citizens who File Complaints Against Judges

HALT's 2008 Judicial Accountability Report Card found that state and federal systems of judicial oversight are shrouded in secrecy. Although most jurisdictions no longer prohibit citizens from disclosing information about an ethics complaint against a judge, a whopping 17 states and the federal circuits continue to retain some form of gag rule.

"In an era that embraces principles of sunshine and transparency, it's astounding that citizens across the country are restrained from speaking about the misconduct of state and federal judges," stated HALT Senior Counsel Suzanne M. Blonder. "Gag rules not only violate an individual's right to free speech, they also keep the general public in the dark about whether the system of judicial oversight is operat-

ing effectively."

The restrictive rules range from those which require complainants to remain silent in certain contexts to those that strictly forbid individuals from speaking about a judge's misconduct until a judicial conduct commission orders public discipline.

Nevada, New Hampshire and the federal circuits maintain modified gag rules. In New Hampshire, the grievant may not even mention an ethics complaint to family members or friends until the state's Judicial Conduct Committee files formal charges against the judge, dismisses a grievance or informally resolves the matter.

Fifteen states—Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massa-

chusetts, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia and Wyoming—go a step further, barring all speech about judicial misconduct until public discipline is ordered.

Some of these states threaten citizens with criminal sanctions for daring to speak publicly about a judge's misconduct. The complaint form provided by Arkansas' Judicial Discipline and Disability Commission informs complainants: "Any information contained in this letter or received from you is strictly confidential Any person who violates this confidentiality requirement is subject to punishment for contempt of the Arkansas Supreme Court."

For more information about gag rules across the country, visit our Web site at www.halt.org. ■

Join HALT'S Civil Justice Legacy Society

Would you like to maximize your charitable giving, satisfy your own financial needs and help guarantee the future success of HALT's legal reform work? Then you should consider joining HALT's Civil Justice Legacy Society—a group of dedicated supporters who make a long-term commitment to the legal reform movement—through a planned gift to HALT.

Planned giving options include, but are not limited to, will bequests, trust benefits, annuity assets, life insurance policies, IRS or retirement plan assets, and personal residences or other real property. Including a charitable contribution to HALT in your estate plan can not only have significant and immediate tax advantages for you, but it also ensures that HALT has the resources to expand our unique advocacy and education programs well into the future.

To honor those who make a long-term commitment to HALT through a planned gift, members of our Civil Justice Legacy Society are recognized in our Annual Report on HALT's Honor Roll as our most gen-

erous and committed donors.

If you would like to receive estate and gift planning information, please contact Pat Ezzell at 202-887-8255 (petzell@halt.org) or visit www.halt.org. ■

HALT's 2008 Spring Interns

HALT recently welcomed three new interns for the Spring 2008 term. Annie Durkin is a senior at The Catholic University of America majoring in history. Andrew Gillespie is a junior at the University of Vermont, with a double major in Political Science and Philosophy. Christine Ting is a junior

political science major and literature in writing minor at the University of California, San Diego. ■



Annie Durkin



Andrew Gillespie



Christine Ting

An Interview with Mark Britton

A 16-year lawyer with experience in the e-commerce industry, Mark Britton is the CEO and President of Avvo (www.avvo.com), a free consumer-oriented lawyer directory Web site.

Why did you start Avvo?

We started Avvo to empower consumers to handle their legal matters with confidence. The reality is that there are few resources for consumers to get the information and guidance they need when faced with a legal matter, particularly if they need a lawyer. Consumers are overwhelmed and intimidated by the legal industry's big words, complex processes and serious consequences. Rather than playing roulette with the Yellow Pages, they need a true resource to get them the information and guidance they need to make wise choices. We also started Avvo to help lawyers set themselves apart and generate new clients.

What makes Avvo different from other lawyer search Web sites?

Avvo offers consumers more information and better guidance than they've ever had access to before—and, best of all, it is free. Avvo offers ratings and profiles for every lawyer, as well as client reviews, peer reviews and attorney disciplinary records. Avvo also offers a question and answer forum where people can ask real attorneys—anonously if desired—any legal question and receive personalized answers.

Before Avvo, every rating system only rated lawyers highly—every lawyer was “super” or the “best.” The Avvo Rating has high and low scores, ranging from 1 (“Extreme Caution”) to 10 (“Superb”). Before Avvo, client ratings for lawyers did not exist, and in some states you had to be a private detective in order to determine whether a lawyer had been sanctioned. Before Avvo, lawyers did not have a free place

to enhance their Web presence and attract new clients.

What information goes into the lawyer profiles?

The stars of the Avvo Profile are the Avvo Rating, client ratings and peer endorsements. The Avvo Rating is our attempt to evaluate the lawyer's background. Client ratings offer a first-hand account of what it's like to work with the attorney. Peer endorsements allow other lawyers to say, “thumbs up, this is a strong lawyer in my community.” We believe these three different points-of-view give the consumer a better picture of the lawyer's background and quality of service than, say, the largest ad in the Yellow Pages or who shows up on the first page of Internet search engines.

Have you encountered any resistance to your project?

Not really. Generally our mission is consistent with that of the state bars and they are happy to help us. One state, New Jersey, refused to turn over certain lawyer records to us, but we were able to get them to change their mind by petitioning their Supreme Court. Florida initially announced that attorneys could not advertise their Avvo Rating, but after we presented to the Florida Bar Committee on Advertising, they reversed their decision. I think there is some tendency in these states to distrust us simply because we are new, but once they understand what we are all about, they are happy to work with us.

How do you calculate the Avvo Ratings for the lawyers listed on your site?

The rating is calculated using a mathematical model that considers the information shown in a lawyer's profile, including a lawyer's years in prac-

tice, disciplinary history, professional achievements and industry recognition—all factors that, in our opinion, are relevant to assessing a lawyer's qualifications.



Mark Britton

What is “Avvo Answers”? Does this service pose any unauthorized practice of law concerns for your Web site?

In its simplest form, Avvo Answers is a forum where consumers can ask legal questions and get personalized answers from real attorneys. This type of thing happens everyday at cocktail parties, church and the local laundromat. We are simply making lawyers and their answers more accessible via the Internet.

I don't believe Avvo Answers poses any unauthorized practice of law concerns. We make it very clear on the Web site that the answers should not be construed as legal advice.

What's next for Avvo?

We continue to add new states. We added Florida, Massachusetts, Colorado and Oregon last month. That gives us coverage for 65 percent of the practicing lawyers in the U.S. We would like to be at 80 percent by the end of the year. We are also getting ready to roll out new features this summer that will continue our mission of getting consumers more information and better guidance, while at the same time allowing solid lawyers to contribute to the site, set themselves apart and attract new clients. ■

“In law, nothing is certain but the expense.”

— Samuel Butler

James C. Turner: State Bar Plan Cuts Access to Affordable Legal Services

On Friday (March 14, 2008), the Wisconsin Supreme Court is considering a new definition of the practice of law that could force consumers to hire a lawyer to deal with even the most routine legal needs.

If the court approves this State Bar proposal, instead of being able to use an affordable legal document assistant, an income tax preparer or a real estate agent, Wisconsinites would have to shell out the hundreds of dollars an hour that lawyers charge.

HALT (Help Abolish Legal Tyranny), the nation's largest and oldest legal reform organization, is urging the court to reject the lawyers' naked power grab and, instead, encourage the development of innova-

tive ways to expand the availability of affordable legal help.

Our view is supported by the U.S. Justice Department, which also opposes the proposed rule.

After complaints about their original proposal were filed with the Supreme Court by consumer advocates like HALT and many Wisconsin businesses, the State Bar added an exception for service providers that are licensed by the state. We agree with the Justice Department that this new exception "would still prohibit non-lawyers from performing services for which legal expertise is unnecessary" and believe that it would only confuse consumers and deter meaningful competition from non-lawyers.

How do the lawyers defend their monopolistic proposal? They say it is really to protect the public from scam artists, particularly "notarios" who falsely claim to be attorneys and prey on the Latino community. But after two years of beating the bushes, the State Bar could produce only six complaints by consumers about non-lawyer legal service providers.

During this same time frame, consumers filed over 2,000 complaints against Wisconsin attorneys.

What makes the lawyers' proposal all the more appalling is that it comes in the midst of a legal access crisis in Wisconsin. As a blue-ribbon panel found just last year, more than "half a million Wisconsinites—people with families, many of whom have jobs, own homes and pay taxes—must contend with significant legal troubles without any legal help because they cannot afford the professional legal help they need."

Instead of responding to this access crisis, Wisconsin's organized State Bar wants a new rule that would make it all but impossible for consumers to get help when they can't afford to hire a lawyer.

There is a better way to both serve and protect legal consumers.

For many years HALT has argued that the unauthorized practice of law is claiming to be a lawyer when you're not. We believe that the defining characteristic of the practice of law is the establishment of an attorney-client relationship.

In recent years the U.S. Justice Department and the Federal Trade Commission have endorsed this common-sense view. The Wisconsin Supreme Court should too, by defining the practice of law as only including activities that require specialized legal skills where an attorney-client relationship is present.

© Madison Capital Times, March 13, 2008



HALT in the Media

- The *Madison Capital Times* published HALT's op-ed "State Bar plan cuts access to affordable legal services" about a proposal before the Wisconsin Supreme Court regarding the unauthorized practice of law (March 13, 2008).

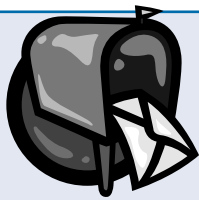
- *MSN Money's* story "Not rich? You still need a will" interviewed Program Director Theresa Meehan Rudy about the importance of preparing a will (March 4, 2008).
- *Legal Assistant Today's* article "Hawaii Attempts to Define The Practice of Law" quotes Program Director Theresa Meehan Rudy.
- The *Albany Times Union's* story "Winning the battle, losing the war" about the difficulties associated with collecting in small claims courts included comments from Executive Director Jim Turner (May 11, 2008).
- Madison, Wisconsin's local ABC station WKOW featured Executive

Director Jim Turner in their piece "Need a Lawyer? State Bar Petition Could Force You to Hire one More Often, Critics Say" (February 8, 2008).

Our recently released Judicial Accountability Report Card has also garnered press attention:

- *Washington Post*: "City System Ranks Among Worst in Nation" (May 6, 2008).
- *ABA Journal*: "HALT Report Blasts States for Secretive Judicial Ethics Oversight" (May 6, 2008).
- *New Orleans Times Picayune*: "State gets low marks for judicial oversight" (May 11, 2008).
- *Metropolitan News Enterprise*: "State Judicial Accountability System Ranked Fifth Nationwide" (May 5, 2008).
- *North County Gazette*: "HALT: Judicial Accountability Standards Toothless" (May 4, 2008). ■

From the Mailbox



Dear HALT,

I think the judge in my case has behaved unethically. What can I do?

Frustrated in Fresno

Dear Frustrated,

Every state and federal judicial circuit has implemented ethics rules to ensure that judges are not fraudulent, corrupt, dishonest or biased in the performance of their official duties. If you think that the judge in your case is guilty of this sort of misconduct, you can report it to the state or federal board charged with oversight of judicial conduct.

HALT's *Everyday Law Series* article "Complaining About a Judge" provides an overview of the state and federal disciplinary processes for judges, including the steps for filing an ethics complaint with the appropriate body. You can download it from our Web site at www.halt.org, or write for a free copy to HALT, Inc., 1612 K St. NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20006. ■

Book Sale

To purchase any of the titles listed, mail in the **Publication Order Form** along with a check, money order or your credit card information to: HALT, 1612 K Street NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20006. Or, if it's more convenient, call us toll-free at (888) 367-4258 and charge your order. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. DC residents add 6% sales tax.

HOW TO CARE FOR AGING PARENTS

Includes nearly 700 pages of sound and compassionate advice on caring for the legal, emotional, financial and medical needs of the elderly. **\$18.95**

HOW COURTS & JUDGES WORK

Explains the organization and hierarchy of our state and federal courts and the relationship between them. **\$12.00**

FED UP WITH THE LEGAL SYSTEM

Provides a road map of what we can do to hold lawyers accountable and make our civil justice system work for all of us. **\$9.95**

JK LASSER'S YOUR INCOME TAX 2008

Saves you money by breaking down complex tax laws so that you'll know how to prepare receipts, calculate depreciation, take advantage of estate tax-savings plans and more. **\$17.95**

Publication Order Form

Title(s)	Price
(DC Residents: Add 6% Sales Tax)	
S&H 1-2 books \$4.95/3-4 books \$7.00	
Additional Gift to HALT	
TOTAL	
Name: _____	
Address: _____	
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	
Please charge to my credit card:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> American Express	
Credit Card No.: _____	
Expiration Date: _____	
Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Phone Number: _____	

Combined Federal Campaign # 10439

April-June 2008

Non-profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
AMI 22304

HALT
An Organization of
Americans for Legal Reform
1612 K Street, NW • Suite 510
Washington, DC 20006