

# Committee investigating court system fairness

Dear Editor:

In the fall of 1995, the Alaska Supreme Court formed a committee to investigate and report on issues of fairness and access in the court system. Superior Court Judge Mary Greene co-chairs the Fairness and Access Committee with me, and the Judicial Council provides staff support. This committee is working to improve ongoing efforts to provide an impartial court, a place free from ethnic and cultural bias. We divided the committee's work into several areas and appointed a subcommittee to investigate each are.

One are concerns the views and experiences of individuals and groups of different ethnicity (for example: Native Alaskan, African-American, Hispanic, Asian, etc.) with the Alaska Court System. The Consumers/Users Subcommittee was created to investigate and make recommendations in this subject area.

I write to you in the hope that you or your readers can assist the Consumers/Users Subcommittee accomplish its first task. The committee seeks any relevant written information that you have compiled concerning complaints, experiences or observations of ethnic groups or individuals in connection with their contacts

with the Alaska Court System. For example, has your organization published resolutions calling for changes in the justice system? Did anyone write a letter or orally complain about treatment by Alaska Court System personnel Has your organization reported any misunderstanding that occurred between a judge and a defendant concerning language problems?

We are not interested in any private information or the names of the person making the complaints or preparing the documents. If the documents you have contain private information or a person's name, please feel free to remove this information from the copy sent to us.

We would appreciate your forwarding any written material you have to Susanne Di Pietro, Alaska Judicial Council, 1029 W. Third Ave., Suite 201, Anchorage, Alaska 99507, (907) 279-2526. You may send information to Susanne's electronic mail address: [Susanne@ajc.state.sk.us](mailto:Susanne@ajc.state.sk.us), or you may call Susanne at 1-800-582-1559 to make an oral report.

Thank you. We appreciate your help.

*Very truly yours,*

*Justice Jay A. Rabinowitz*

*Co-Chair Fairness and Access Committee  
of the Supreme Court of Alaska*