

In their piece regarding the JNE Commission (California's Star Chamber, Forum, May 6) Shawn Steel and Patriok Manshardt level a number of attacks at the State Bar and at the commission. One of those attacks stands out as so outrageous that I cannot leave it unaddressed.

Steel and Manshardt claim that One does not have to look far for evidence of political bias on the part of the commission. Commission vice chair Arturo Vargas was formerly the vice president of community education and public policy for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Without any further evidence, Steel and Manshardt leave their readers with the inescapable conclusion that because of his civil rights work, Vargas would behave in a manner that was unethical.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I have known Arturo Vargas for a number of years and he has always demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism. Time and again he has demonstrated that he is a thoughtful and deliberate decision maker in circumstances in which there are a variety of perspectives and opinions. I have never known him to use political bias in evaluating any individual's professional competence.

It is disrespectful to the entire civil rights community to suggest that we would perform a service as vital as sitting on the JNE Commission guided by anything less than the highest professional standards. It is inaccurate and insulting to Vargas to suggest that he, in particular, would do so. Steel and Manshardt owe Vargas an apology - they should be ashamed.

Abby J. Leibman

Los Angeles

The writer is executive director of the California Women's Law Center.

This is with regard to the article on Page 1 of the Daily Journal discussing the criticism of the Jenny Commission by the governor and Court of Appeal Justice Arthur G. Scotland (Jenny' Panel Is Thrust Into the Spotlight, April 25).

I disavow any agreement with the commission's finding, since I have no knowledge of the nominee's competence. I am aware, however, of the rigorous integrity that accompanies such a finding. There is no personal advantage whatever for a member of a bar committee to find a judicial appointee unqualified, particularly where the appointee is a sitting judge. Those who make such findings risk incurring the wrath of the powerful and receive little appreciation.

Given the awesome responsibilities and duties of our appellate judges it is vital that their qualifications be subjected to careful and painstaking scrutiny. The Jenny Commission deserves our support, rather than criticism, for undertaking this difficult and thankless task.

Leonard Sacks

Granada Hills

In their piece regarding the JNE Commission (California's Star Chamber, Forum, May 8) Shawn Steel and Patrick Manshardt level a number of attacks at the State Bar and at the commission. One of those attacks stands out as so outrageous that I cannot leave it unaddressed.

Steel and Manshardt claim that One does not have to look far for evidence of political bias on the part of the commission. Commission vice chair Arturo Vargas was formerly the vice president of community education and public policy for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund. Without any further evidence, Steel and Manshardt leave their readers with the inescapable conclusion that because of his civil rights work, Vargas would behave in a manner that was unethical.

Nothing could be further from the truth. I have known Arturo Vargas for a number of years and he has always demonstrated the highest standards of professionalism. Time and again he has demonstrated that he is a thoughtful and deliberate decision maker in circumstances in which there are a variety of perspectives and opinions. I have never known him to use political bias in evaluating any individual's professional competence.

It is disrespectful to the entire civil rights community to suggest that we would perform a service as vital as sitting on the JNE Commission guided by anything less than the highest professional standards. It is inaccurate and insulting to Vargas to suggest that he, in particular, would do so. Steel and Manshardt owe Vargas an apology - they should be ashamed.

Abby J. Leibman

Los Angeles

The writer is executive director of the California Women's Law Center.