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Judge Feinman's bail flail: Are thugs getting off easy?

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The Issue: Whether Judge Carol Feinman has been too lenient granting bail in her Bronx criminal court.

Judge Carol Feinman is a disgrace to her profession and on the wish list of every desperado now waiting for arraignment in Bronx Criminal Court ("Bail-Fail Judge With a Grudge," Aug. 31).

This socially active West Villager has more of a desire to serve her own causes than those of the larger community.

Her willingness to set criminals free without bail to get her way is a danger to the public.

With crime rising in The Bronx, the last thing we need is a misfit on the bench.

T. Miraldi

The Bronx

Judges who must make bail decisions have unenviable jobs.

Often, the judge has little or no discretion on whether to grant or deny bail. Even when there is room for discretion, the judge must look to specific factors and criteria that are required by law.

Judges are not permitted to keep defendants locked up before trial simply because they are charged with crimes.

Judges are responsible for making difficult decisions, in public, on a daily basis.

Those decisions are not, and should not be, immune from public comment and criticism where warranted.

But criticizing bail decisions without reference to specific legal duties does not help the public understand the issues or fairly evaluate judicial behavior.

Stewart Aaron

President
New York County
Lawyers Association
Manhattan

I had the honor of working with Feinman for almost 14 years. We were administrative law judges and served together on the emergency panel of the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance.

Although I am a fairly conservative Republican and Feinman a liberal Democrat, no one would have noticed any difference in our decisions.

We both applied the law as it was written, not as we would have preferred.

And from what I am able to make out, Feinman is still applying the law as it is written.

She should be commended, not stigmatized, for following the law.

Michael Keohane

East Patchogue

Obviously, Feinman is showing poor decision-making in the release of criminals.

What does it take to put career criminals away before they hurt or kill someone?

This judge should be removed from the bench and put out to pasture before she lets a murderer back on the street.

Liberal judges are more dangerous than the criminals themselves.

Joe DePascale

Brooklyn

Thanks for another excellent editorial.

While many are appalled by Feinman's rulings and behavior, it's hard to criticize her, given the notoriously low standards set by the state's chief judge, Jonathan Lippman.

Feinman is simply using what she controls to get what she wants, regardless of the consequences to the citizenry.

Apparently, that's how business is done in our judiciary, and Lippman would be the last person to do anything about it.

Charles Compton

The Bronx

I read with disgust your series of articles attacking Judge Feinman.

The Eighth Amendment guarantees any person charged with a crime reasonable bail. The purpose of bail in New York is to ensure the defendant's return to court and not as a means of punishment.

Your mean-spirited attack upon judges creates a know-nothing environment based upon some amorphous claim by police officers and assistant district attorneys.

Feinman is a fine judge who is exercising her responsibilities as she sees fit.

She should not be abused and taken advantage of, knowing full well that she cannot respond.

While I do not know Judge Feinman personally, I know her from reputation, both among the private bar as well as assistant district attorneys.

My associate, Brian Pakett, has appeared before Judge Feinman on numerous occasions and has always known her to be fair and reasonable to all sides.

Murray Richman

The Bronx

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