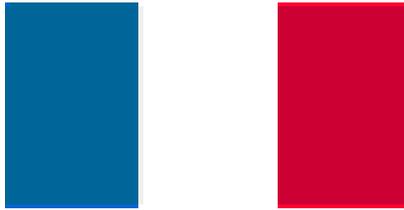


## The International Program – France



June 30, 2006

**Guest:** MR. ALEXIS FRANCOIS CHARLES BOUROZ  
Deputy Director for Internships, National School for Magistrates (ENM)  
Bordeaux, FRANCE

Mr. Bouroz' visit to the United States was administered by the Phelps Stokes Fund on behalf of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. The purpose of his visit was, in part, to learn more about the "structure and administration of the U.S. judicial system and the interaction between federal, state and local legal entities."

While in the nation's capital, he met with representatives from the U.S. Supreme Court, the Department of Justice, the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, and other educational and non-governmental agencies. Judicial Watch's president, Tom Fitton, was invited to meet with Mr. Bouroz and discuss the organization's mission in promoting ethics, accountability, and transparency in the judiciary.

Mr. Fitton discussed Judicial Watch's profile as a non-governmental and non-partisan educational foundation and its activities in investigating and prosecuting corruption in the government and judiciary. He further discussed the tools used by Judicial Watch, such as open records laws, the media, and litigation, to fulfill its educational mission.

Further, in response to Mr. Bouroz' questions on Judicial Watch's involvement and oversight of the judiciary, Mr. Fitton discussed in detail [Judicial Watch's lawsuit](#) brought against the U.S. Senate for its unconstitutional use of the filibuster to prevent a president's nominees from receiving an up-or-down vote; the means used to [expose and discipline](#) judges who engage in corrupt practices; and what to look for in the selection of candidates apart from political party ideology.

Mr. Bouroz astutely commented on the difficulty in determining the character of a judicial candidate and asked how we, in the U.S., made such a determination. In response, it was agreed that the appointment of candidates to the federal bench has always been highly politicized. However, Mr. Fitton stated his belief that a determination can be made on a judge's qualifications by examining their past rulings, commentaries, speeches, affiliations with private groups, and their general reputation in the legal community. The failed nomination of Harriet Miers to a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court was given in example of the conservative community's wariness of "stealth" candidates, even if the candidate is deemed "politically" conservative. It is a solid record and respect from the judicial community at large that helps ensure a nominee, if confirmed, will serve as a guardian of the Constitution and respect the separation of powers therein.