

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 24-443

Judge:

Complainant:

ORDER

The Complainant alleged a justice of the peace inappropriately used her experience as a therapist in an order of protection matter and made errors regarding the ruling.

The role of the Commission on Judicial Conduct is to impartially determine whether a judicial officer has engaged in conduct that violates the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct or Article 6.1 of the Arizona Constitution. There must be clear and convincing evidence of such a violation in order for the Commission to take disciplinary action against a judicial officer.

After review, the Commission found the judge provided advice, which bordered upon therapeutic advice or victim advocate advice which put Respondent outside the role of a neutral arbiter. While this was improper under Rules 1.2 and 2.2 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, the Scope Section of the Code provides that not every transgression will result in the imposition of discipline. The Commission decided, after considering all the facts and circumstances, to dismiss the Complaint pursuant to Commission Rules 16(b) and 23(a), but to issue a warning letter to the judicial officer. Further, the Commission recommends the judge seek additional training on protective orders through either pre-recorded trainings available in Wendell or reaching out to trainers in either Pima or Maricopa Counties.

Commission members Roger D. Barton and Colleen E. Concannon did not participate in the consideration of this matter.

Dated: July 23, 2025

FOR THE COMMISSION

/s/ Christopher P. Staring

Hon. Christopher P. Staring
Commission Chair

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on July 23, 2025.

CONFIDENTIAL

Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct
1501 W. Washington Street, Suite 229
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

2024 - 443

COMPLAINT AGAINST A JUDGE

Name: Judge's Name:

Instructions: Use this form or plain paper of the same size to file a complaint. Describe in your own words what you believe the judge did that constitutes judicial misconduct. Be specific and list all of the names, dates, times, and places that will help the commission understand your concerns. Additional pages may be attached along with copies (not originals) of relevant court documents. Please complete one side of the paper only, and keep a copy of the complaint for your records.

Judge _____ issued an ex parte order of protection and then upheld it contrary to facts and law, and displayed bias and a lack of fairness, undermining confidence in the judiciary while doing so. She was not competent in handling the matter and was biased in its handling. Her background as a therapist should make her cautious in issuing protective orders based on her specialized knowledge and past experience, but instead, she came off as a domestic violence victim advocate during these proceedings.

_____ and _____ are husband and wife. On _____ while taking evidence in the ex parte hearing, Judge _____ essentially professionally counseled the Plaintiff, _____ and diagnosed (very inappropriately, it must be added) _____ FROM THE BENCH without ever meeting him or seeing _____ professionally. Judge _____ without the address being requested in the protective order petition of _____ unilaterally added _____ business address, a rental property of his business, in which he is the sole signatory of its commercial lease.

Then, in the contested hearing on _____ Judge _____ left in place the protected location, _____ business address, contrary to the facts and law. _____ is the sole member and manager of _____ on the date of the contested hearing, was nothing more than a former member of the _____. By barring _____ from the sole location in which he operated his business, Judge _____ crippled him economically and interfered with his contract with the lessor.

The repudiations of Judge _____ incompetence and bias have nearly destroyed _____ financially and psychologically. He had his vehicle repossessed and was evicted from his personal residence, all because Judge _____ prevented him from returning to his own business while _____ operated a competing business across the parking lot at the same general location.

Judge _____ displayed a lack of knowledge of the law (the managing member of an _____ makes all managerial decisions, including whether a former or even a current non-managing member of an _____ can be present at the place of business of the _____ on the day of the contested hearing, had no legal right to be present at the business location of _____. Judge _____ displayed a lack of impartiality and fairness, and displayed bias. Her conduct undermined confidence in the judiciary. She clearly allowed her "other interests" as _____ to interfere with her judicial role. Judge _____ unsolicited and unnecessary communications with _____ also exceeded the scope of permissible ex parte communications.

See Rules 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4(b), 2.5 & 2.9.

Once the commission listens to the two recordings of the proceedings, disciplinary action will be warranted.