

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 25-181

Judge:

Complainant:

ORDER

July 29, 2025

The Complainant alleged a judge illegally jailed him for failing to pay a debt in family court.

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.

The Commission does not have jurisdiction to overturn, amend, or remand a judicial officer's legal rulings. The Commission reviewed all relevant available information and concluded there was not clear and convincing evidence of ethical misconduct in this matter. The complaint is therefore dismissed pursuant to Commission Rules 16(a) and 23(a).

Commission members Regina L. Nassen and Christopher P. Staring did not participate in the consideration of this matter.

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on July 29, 2025.

2025-181

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.

Judicial Misconduct Complaint -

I am submitting this complaint because the judge in my divorce case acted with clear bias and violated principles of fairness, ethics, and justice. Her decisions devastated my life and showed a complete disregard for my rights and well-being.

The judge ordered me to pay _____ in cash in order to keep my truck. I explained to the court that I had just been shot and was recovering from a violent crime that left me unable to walk properly or work. I told her losing my truck would cause extreme hardship and asked for a payment plan. She refused, saying none of that mattered, and when I couldnt pay in full, she sent me to jail for _____ days.

This is not only unethical — it may have been illegal.

Under *Bearden v. Georgia* (1983), the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that it is unconstitutional to jail someone for nonpayment of a fine or fee if they are unable to pay. The court must first determine whether the person had the ability to pay and consider alternatives. This judge ignored all of that. I explained my hardship. I asked for a payment program. I was denied and punished for being poor.

The Arizona Constitution (Article II, Section 18) also states:

> “There shall be no imprisonment for debt, except in cases of fraud.”

There was no fraud proven, no justification for putting me in jail over a payment I clearly explained I could not make.

Additionally, as a victim of a violent crime, I should have been treated with more sensitivity and care by the judicial system. Instead, the judge treated my trauma as irrelevant and punished me as though I were making excuses.

Later, I received a letter stating I would get no compensation from the sale of my truck, even though the court had previously stated that I would. My ex-wife and her attorney also lied under oath, and I presented evidence of fraud in the case that was completely ignored.

Before this, I had a home with over _____ in equity, and now I have nothing. The decisions made in this courtroom left me without a vehicle, without a home, and without dignity. I have _____ children, and now I have no means to even help or support them. I’ ve been in court many times in my life, including

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criminal court, and Ive never felt this kind of bias and disrespect — not even when I was sentenced to prison. That judge showed more fairness than this one ever did.

This judge broke me down not just as a man, but as a human being. Ive completely lost faith in the court system in Arizona. I dont know how to carry on after this. This divorce has wrecked me emotionally and financially. I respectfully ask that this judge be investigated for judicial misconduct, abuse of discretion, violation of constitutional rights, and failure to uphold ethical and legal standards.

I ask the Commission to bring justice — not just for me, but for anyone else who may be mistreated under her courtroom.

Sincerely,