

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 25-288

Judge:

Complainant:

ORDER

October 22, 2025

The Complainant alleged a superior court judge made improper rulings in a family law case.

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 allegations of the complaint in this matter solely raised disagreements with legal rulings. The Commission does not have jurisdiction to overturn, amend, or remand a judicial officer's legal rulings. "A good faith error of fact or law does not violate this rule. However, a pattern of legal error or an intentional disregard of the law may constitute misconduct." *See* comment 3 to Rule 2.2 of the Code of Judicial conduct. Any violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct must be proven by clear and convincing evidence.

A mistake in a ruling does not automatically mean that the judicial officer has engaged in judicial misconduct. Judicial officers are required to exercise their discretion in making their decisions. Even if a judicial officer's decision is legally or factually incorrect, the ruling is generally considered to be "legal error" and not "ethical misconduct" that the Commission can address. When a complaint to the Commission solely relates to the correctness of a judicial officer's legal decisions, the Complainant is seeking the Commission to function in the capacity of an appellate court. Correcting legal errors is the role of the appellate courts, not the Commission.

The Commission is a regulatory body with limited jurisdiction. The Commission is not a court, and as such, it does not have any authority to overturn a judicial officer's rulings, intervene in a case, assign a new judge to hear a case, or award any monetary or other relief. The Commission process cannot be a substitute for seeking appellate review.

The Commission reviewed all information submitted by the Complainant 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).

A Duty Panel comprised of Commission members Regina L. Nassen, Scott H. O'Connor, and Christopher P. Staring considered this matter.

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on October 22, 2025.

2025-288

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.

In of my daughter revealed to me she had been sexually abused by her stepsister. As soon as she told me, I reached out to dad who responded by calling me names and saying I would do anything to alienate my daughter away from him. When my daughter reported it to me, I contacted police counseling services and had a forensic interview completed. The forensic interview confirmed the allegations and that it had occurred more than once. At this time, her father stopped paying counseling for our daughter sayin she didn't need it. However, because of the sexual abuse she needs counseling so that she could understand the situation and her feelings.

I filed emergency orders and 'regular' orders to change the legal - decision making and parenting time in regard to my daughter. When I filed the emergency orders, I also filed a Protective Order, which was granted. However, when a hearing was requested, father brought in his parents which devastated my daughter as she is was not wanting anyone to know about this. That judge did not remove anyone who was not directly involved in the case and the hearing was dismissed. With the emergency orders, the clerk and judge were quick to respond and extremely helpful trying to set a court date. However, because father refused service of the documents imes, she was unable to set a court date and had to send it to Judge

During the trial, her father confirmed that he refused to tell me about the incidents, stopped paying counseling because he feels my daughter doesn't need it, told my daughter and the judge that the behavior was normal for children. This has caused severe emotional distress on my daughter as well as confusion as to what constitutes positive relationships. Judge chose to leave everything as is, did not see the emotional trauma this has caused my daughter, does not see the abusive tactics of her father even blatantly in the judge's court.

I would also like to file a complaint against the Court Appointed Advocate when she conducted her interview with my daughter who was in her father's care at the time of the interview. Found my daughter was hesitant and not fully able to speak for herself. noted the hesitancy in my daughter's voice but did not follow up or interview her again while in my care. This is grossly incompetent on her part considering the sexual allegations were confirmed.

Judge and did not provide adequate services to ensure my daughter's safety from the continued verbal and physical abuse she endures in her father's home. I sent Judge a reconsideration, providing numerous scientific data research on the emotional, physical, and brain damage that will be caused if my daughter is to continue these relationships. He denied my request.

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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