

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 25-425

Judge:

Complainant:

ORDER

The Complainant alleged that a superior court judge was distracted during a jury trial.

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 reviewed all relevant available information and concluded there was not clear and convincing evidence of ethical misconduct in this matter. The Commission noted that the judge was not distracted from his duties, however, he expressed remorse in his response for the perception his actions gave. The Commission approved sending the judge an advisory letter reminding him of the duty to always act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the judiciary according to Rule 1.2. The complaint is therefore dismissed pursuant to Commission Rules 16(b) and 23(a).

Commission member Roger D. Barton did not participate in the consideration of this matter.

Dated: January 28, 2026

FOR THE COMMISSION

/s/ Christopher P. Staring

Hon. Christopher P. Staring
Commission Chair

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on January 28, 2026.

CONFIDENTIAL

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

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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.

On _____ I testified as a witness in my husband' s retrial before Judge _____ in _____ County Superior Court. As I walked up to the witness stand, I observed Judge _____ working on what appeared to be a crossword puzzle. He had a pad of paper or a clipboard with several pages, and the puzzle was visible between them. He appeared to be writing on it with a pen or pencil. I involuntarily made a facial expression of surprise upon seeing this.

After I left the stand and the court recessed, I informed my husband' s attorney of what I had seen. She responded by advising me not to make faces at the judge. I also immediately told my mother, _____ who had been present in the courtroom during the trial. Later that same day, I called _____ a friend, and described what I had witnessed. On _____ still bothered, I texted _____ another friend, about the incident. A screenshot of that message is attached.

This trial followed a mistrial in _____ I am submitting this complaint based on direct observation of the judge' s conduct during courtroom testimony. I am available to provide further information if needed.



Are you awake?

Yes

Ok I want your thoughts:
When I went up to testify I noticed the
judge was doing a crossword puzzle.

He's over it and ready to dismiss

Excellent

Sorry I just pulled into the apartment

It's all good

Yeah he's just got to let things run it's
course.

You awake

Yeah at court

[redacted] is in the firepit

Forgot you were coming down

Subject



Text Message - RCS

