

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

**TATIANA COFFINGER,**

a Judge of the County, Family and  
Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County

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**NOTICE OF FORMAL  
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

NOTICE is hereby given to Respondent, Tatiana Coffinger, a Judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County, pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4, of the Judiciary Law, that the State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that cause exists to serve upon Respondent the annexed Formal Written Complaint; and that, in accordance with said statute, Respondent is requested within twenty (20) days of the service of the annexed Formal Written Complaint upon her to serve the Commission at its Albany office, Corning Tower, Suite 2301, Albany, New York 12223, with her verified Answer to the specific paragraphs of the Complaint.

Dated: December 7, 2021  
New York, New York

**ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN**  
Administrator and Counsel  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct  
61 Broadway, Suite 1200  
New York, New York 10006  
(646) 386-4800

To: William J. Dreyer, Esq.  
Attorney for Respondent  
Dreyer Boyajian, LLP  
75 Columbia Street  
Albany, New York 12210

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

**FORMAL  
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

**TATIANA COFFINGER,**

a Judge of the County, Family and  
Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County.

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1. Article VI, Section 22, of the Constitution of the State of New York establishes a Commission on Judicial Conduct ("Commission"), and Section 44, subdivision 4, of the Judiciary Law empowers the Commission to direct that a Formal Written Complaint be drawn and served upon a judge.
2. The Commission has directed that a Formal Written Complaint be drawn and served upon Tatiana Coffinger ("Respondent"), a Judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County.
3. The factual allegations set forth in Charges I and II state acts of judicial misconduct by Respondent in violation of the Rules of the Chief Administrator of the Courts Governing Judicial Conduct ("Rules").
4. Respondent was admitted to the practice of law in New York in 2001. She has been a Judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County, since 2020. Respondent's current term expires on December 31, 2030. Previously, she served as a Justice of the Indian Lake Town Court, Hamilton County, from July through December 2018.

## CHARGE I

5. In or about June 2019, during her campaign for election as judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts in Hamilton County, Respondent personally solicited contributions on behalf of a political organization on four separate occasions by posting on social media an invitation to a fundraising event on behalf of the Hamilton County Republican Committee.

### Specifications to Charge I

6. Facebook is an internet social networking website and platform that *inter alia* allows users to post and share content on their own Facebook pages as well as on the Facebook pages of other users and on Facebook groups. Facebook users are responsible for managing the privacy settings associated with their accounts. At the option of the account holder, the content of one's Facebook page and posts may be viewable online by the public or restricted to one's Facebook "Friends."

7. At all times relevant to this charge, Respondent was a candidate for election as judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts in Hamilton County.

8. At all times relevant to this Charge, Respondent maintained a campaign-related Facebook account under the name "Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton County Court Judge," which was viewable by the public.

9. On or about June 3, June 9, June 17 and June 21, 2019, Respondent posted to her campaign's Facebook page an invitation to the Hamilton County Republican picnic. It read, "You are Invited 2019 Republican Picnic and Meet the Candidates Day!" The invitation offered food, drinks, "Music, Bingo, Door prizes and more!" Ticket prices

ranged from \$12 to \$35. The invitation also read “Tickets – See any Republican Committee Member.” Screenshots of this invitation are appended as Exhibit A.

10. At all times relevant to this charge, all four of Respondent’s posts advertising the event were viewable by the public.

11. At all times relevant to this charge, Respondent was scheduled to speak at the “2019 Hamilton County Republican Picnic and Meet the Candidates Day.” She did, in fact, ultimately speak at the event.

12. The event advertised by Respondent took place on or about June 22, 2019. It was a fundraiser that generated a profit of nearly \$1,800 for the Hamilton County Republican Committee.

13. At all times relevant to this charge, the Hamilton County Republican Committee constituted a political organization.

14. By reason of the foregoing, Respondent should be disciplined for cause, pursuant to Article VI, Section 22, subdivision (a), of the Constitution and Section 44, subdivision 1, of the Judiciary Law, in that Respondent, while a candidate for public election to judicial office, failed to uphold the integrity and independence of the judiciary by failing to maintain high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary would be preserved, in violation of Section 100.1 of the Rules; failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, in that she failed to respect and comply with the law and failed to act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, in violation of Section 100.2(A) of the Rules; and failed to refrain from inappropriate political activity, in that she allowed her name to be used in connection with activity of a political organization, in violation of Section

100.5(A)(1)(d) of the Rules, personally solicited funds on behalf of a political organization, in violation of Section 100.5(A)(1)(h) of the Rules, and personally solicited contributions for a political party's fundraising event at which she was scheduled to speak, in violation of Section 100.5(A)(2)(i) of the Rules.

## **CHARGE II**

15. In or about June 2019, during her campaign for election as judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts in Hamilton County, Respondent approved the content and distribution of campaign literature falsely depicting that one of her opponents in the Republican primary would appear on a line labeled "Democrat."

### **Specifications to Charge II**

16. In 2019, Respondent ran in the Republican Party primary for the party's nomination to the office of judge of the County, Family and Surrogate's Courts in Hamilton County. Her two opponents in the primary were Marsha King Purdue and James W. Hyde, IV. The Republican primary took place on or about June 25, 2019. There was no Democratic primary.

17. At all times relevant to this charge, Ms. Purdue was a registered Republican, Respondent knew or believed Ms. Purdue was a Republican, and Respondent knew that Ms. Purdue was running against her in the Republican primary. Respondent also knew that Ms. Purdue had been the elected Hamilton County District Attorney since 2012, and Respondent believed Ms. Purdue had widespread name recognition among Republican voters in the county. In 2019, there were approximately 2,659 registered Republican voters in Hamilton County, and approximately 954 registered Democrats.

18. In or about June 2019, prior to the primary, Respondent approved the content and distribution of campaign literature to be mailed to registered Republicans (“mailer”), depicting a sample primary ballot for the upcoming Hamilton County Republican primary. A copy of the mailer is appended as Exhibit B.

19. In the campaign mailer (Exhibit B), Respondent depicted an “Unofficial Sample Ballot” that identified Ms. Purdue on a line labeled “Democrat,” which Respondent knew or should have known would not have appeared on the actual Republican primary ballot. A copy of the actual Sample Ballot from the Board of Elections is appended as Exhibit C.

20. Respondent and/or her campaign distributed the misleading mailer (Exhibit B) approximately one week before the primary election to an estimated 1,600 to 1,800 households of registered Republican voters in Hamilton County.

21. Respondent won the primary election with a total of 748 votes, defeating Ms. Purdue, who received 351 votes, and Mr. Hyde, who received 200 votes. Respondent thereafter won the general election in November 2019 with a total of 1,446 votes, defeating Ms. Purdue, who received 1,020 votes on the Democratic line, having been nominated by the Democratic Party without a primary or opponents, notwithstanding that she was a registered Republican.

22. By reason of the foregoing, Respondent should be disciplined for cause, pursuant to Article VI, Section 22, subdivision (a), of the Constitution and Section 44, subdivision 1, of the Judiciary Law, in that Respondent, while a candidate for public election to judicial office, failed to uphold the integrity and independence of the judiciary by failing to maintain high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of

the judiciary would be preserved, in violation of Section 100.1 of the Rules; failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, in that she failed to respect and comply with the law and failed to act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, in violation of Section 100.2(A) of the Rules; and failed to refrain from inappropriate political activity, in that she failed to maintain the dignity appropriate to judicial office and act in a manner consistent with the impartiality, integrity and independence of the judiciary, failed to prohibit employees and officials who serve at the pleasure of the candidate or were subject to her direction and control from doing on Respondent's behalf what she was prohibited from doing under the Rules, and authorized or knowingly permitted other persons to do for her what Respondent was prohibited from doing under the Rules, in violation of Section 100.5(A)(4)(a), (b) and (c) of the Rules, and knowingly made a false statement or misrepresented the identity, qualifications, current position or other fact concerning an opponent, in violation of Section 100.5(A)(4)(d)(iii) of the Rules.

**WHEREFORE**, by reason of the foregoing, the Commission should take whatever further action it deems appropriate in accordance with its powers under the Constitution and the Judiciary Law of the State of New York.

Dated: December 7, 2021  
New York, New York



**ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN**  
Administrator and Counsel  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct  
61 Broadway, Suite 1200  
New York, New York 10006  
(646) 386-4800

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

-----  
In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

VERIFICATION

**TATIANA COFFINGER,**

a Judge of the County, Family and  
Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County  
-----

STATE OF NEW YORK            )  
  : ss.:  
COUNTY OF NEW YORK        )

ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am the Administrator of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.
2. I have read the foregoing Formal Written Complaint and, upon information and belief, all matters stated therein are true.
3. The basis for said information and belief is the files and records of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert H. Tembeckjian

Sworn to before me this  
7<sup>th</sup> day of December 2021



\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

**LATASHA Y. JOHNSON**  
Notary Public, State of New York  
No.01JO6235579  
Qualified in New York County  
Commission Expires February 14, 2023

# EXHIBIT A



**You are Invited  
2019  
Republican  
Picnic**



**and  
Meet The  
Candidates Day!**

**Old Fashioned Picnic with  
Music,  
Bingo, Door prizes and more!  
All Welcome!**

*BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage &  
Peppers,  
Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert,  
Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!*



**The Pavilion at Speculator  
Noon to 4:00 PM  
Saturday June 22, 2019**



Tickets	Pre-
	sale thru 6/21
	At The Door
Adults	\$30.00
	\$35.00
11-18	
Years	\$12.00
	\$15.00
Children 10 & Under	
Free	

Tickets -  
See Any Republican Committee Member



**Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton County** ...  
**Court Judge**

Like This Page · June 17 · 🌐

Looking forward to seeing people on Saturday at the Hamilton County Republican picnic!

👍 10

4 Shares

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Write a comment...





Tatiana Coffi...



out Videos Posts Events No



Options



# Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton County Court Judge

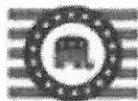


June 3, 2019 · 🌐

Come join us on Saturday, June 22nd to meet the candidates and show your support!!

**Old Fashioned Picnic with Music, Bingo, Door prizes and more! All Welcome!**

*BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage & Peppers, Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert, Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!*



**The Pavilion at Speculator  
Noon to 4:00 PM  
Saturday June 22, 2019**





Tatiana Coffi...



out Videos Posts Events No



Options

show your support...

Old Fashioned Picnic with Music, Bingo, Door prizes and more! All Welcome!

BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage & Peppers, Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert, Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!



The Pavilion at Speculator Noon to 4:00 PM Saturday June 22, 2019



SAT, JUN 22, 2019

Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton Cou...

INTERESTED

John and Linda

John Jay and 11 others



Like



Comment



Share





Tatiana Coffi...



out

Videos

Posts

Events

No



Options

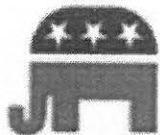


**Tatiana Coffinger for  
Hamilton County Court  
Judge**



June 9, 2019 ·

Less than two weeks from now,  
come out and meet the  
candidates!



**You are Invited**



**2019**

**Republican  
Picnic**

**and**

**Meet The**





Tatiana Coffi...



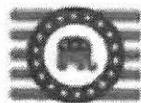
out Videos Posts Events No

Options

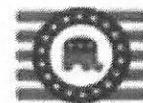
# Meet The Candidates Day!

Old Fashioned Picnic with Music, Bingo, Door prizes and more! All Welcome!

*BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage & Peppers, Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert, Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!*



The Pavilion at Speculator  
Noon to 4:00 PM  
Saturday June 22, 2019



Tickets Pre-sale thru 6/21

13

1 Share

Like Comment Share

people





Tatiana Coffi...



out Videos Posts Events No



Options

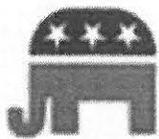


Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton County Court Judge



June 17, 2019 ·

Looking forward to seeing people on Saturday at the Hamilton County Republican picnic!



You are Invited 2019 Republican Picnic



and





Tatiana Coffi...



out

Videos

Posts

Events

No



Options

# and Meet The Candidates Day!

**Old Fashioned Picnic with  
Music,  
Bingo, Door prizes and more!  
All Welcome!**

*BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage &  
Peppers,  
Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert,  
Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!*



**The Pavilion at Speculator  
Noon to 4:00 PM  
Saturday June 22, 2019**



Tickets      Pre-  
sale thru 6/21

10

4 Shares

Like

Comment

Share





Tatiana Coffi...



out Videos Posts Events No



Options

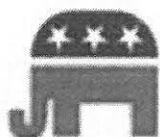


Tatiana Coffinger for Hamilton County Court Judge



June 21, 2019 ·

Last day to get the pre-sale tickets! Looking forward to seeing you in Speculator!



You are Invited 2019 Republican Picnic



and Meet The





Tatiana Coffi...



out Videos Posts Events No

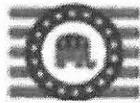


Options

# Candidates Day!

Old Fashioned Picnic with  
Music,  
Bingo, Door prizes and more!  
All Welcome!

*BBQ Chicken, Clam Chowder, Sausage &  
Peppers,  
Burgers & Dogs, Salad, Dessert,  
Iced Tea, Beer & Wine all included!*



The Pavilion at Speculator  
Noon to 4:00 PM  
Saturday June 22, 2019



Tickets Pre-  
sale thru 6/21

6

5 Shares



Like



Comment



Share

people >



# EXHIBIT B

**ON PRIMARY DAY—TUESDAY, JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>—PLEASE VOTE FOR**



**Hamilton County Republican Primary**  
**UNOFFICIAL SAMPLE BALLOT**

OFFICES	1	2	3
	COUNTY FAMILY AND SURROGATE COURT JUDGE 10 YEARS Vote for ONE		
DEMOCRAT  A ★	DEMOCRAT 1A <input type="radio"/> Marsha King Purdue		
REPUBLICAN  B	REPUBLICAN James W. Hyde, IV	REPUBLICAN 2B <input checked="" type="radio"/> Tatiana N. Coffinger	REPUBLICAN Marsha King Purdue

*"Hamilton County deserves a County Judge who is knowledgeable, compassionate, and fair. My legal and personal experience will serve all those who come before the County, Family and Surrogate Courts."*

**TATIANA COFFINGER**

★ For Hamilton County Judge ★

*"The right experience, the right choice."*

## About Tatiana:

- ★ Principal Court Attorney to Hamilton County Family, County and Surrogate Courts
- ★ Former Indian Lake Town Justice
- ★ 19 years experience as Senior and Principal Attorney and Law Clerk for Supreme and County Courts in region
- ★ Written over 3,000 decisions on a variety of civil and criminal matters
- ★ Resident of Indian Lake, married for 20 years, mother of two teenagers

## Endorsed by Hamilton County Republican Leaders:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ✓ Peter Feldstein<br><i>Recently retired<br/>Hamilton County Judge</i> | ✓ Beth Hunt<br><i>Hamilton County Treasurer</i> | ✓ John Frey<br><i>Supervisor, Inlet</i>       |
| ✓ Karl Abrams<br><i>Hamilton County Sheriff</i>                        | ✓ Brian Wells<br><i>Supervisor, Indian Lake</i> | ✓ Rick Wilt<br><i>Supervisor, Arietta</i>     |
| ✓ Jane Zarecki<br><i>Hamilton County Clerk</i>                         | ✓ Clark Seaman<br><i>Supervisor, Long Lake</i>  | ✓ John Stortecky<br><i>Supervisor, Benson</i> |
|  | ✓ Dan Wilt<br><i>Supervisor, Lake Pleasant</i>  |   |

Friends of Tatiana Coffinger  
PO Box 242  
Indian Lake, NY 12842

PRSRT  
FIRST-CLASS  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
ALBANY, NY  
PERMIT# 164



For more about Tatiana, visit

**WWW.VOTECOFFINGER.COM**



Tatiana with her husband John, and their children Alexandra (13) and Nicholas (15).

# EXHIBIT C

OFFICE	1                      2                      3			4                      5	
	<b>COUNTY, FAMILY AND SURROGATE COURT JUDGE</b> 10 YEARS Vote for ONE			<b>COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY</b> 4 YEARS Vote for ONE	
REPUBLICAN	<small>REPUBLICAN</small> 1B <input type="radio"/>	<small>REPUBLICAN</small> 2B <input type="radio"/>	<small>REPUBLICAN</small> 3B <input type="radio"/>	<small>REPUBLICAN</small> 4B <input type="radio"/>	<small>REPUBLICAN</small> 5B <input type="radio"/>
	James W. Hyde, IV	Tatiana N. Coffinger	Marsha King Purdue	Dana J. Beyer	Christopher C. Shambo
WRITE-IN	WRITE-IN			WRITE-IN	

# SAMPLE

1001

**OFFICIAL BALLOT FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION -JUNE 25, 2019**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- (1) Mark only with a writing instrument provided by the Board of Elections.
- (2) To vote for a candidate whose name is printed on this ballot fill in the oval above or next to the name of the candidate.
- (3) To vote for a person whose name is not printed on this ballot write or stamp his or her name in the space labeled "WRITE-IN" that appears at the bottom of the column for such office.
- (4) To vote yes or no on a proposal, if any, that appears on the back of the ballot, fill in the oval that corresponds to your vote.
- (5) Any other mark or writing, or any erasure made on this ballot outside the voting ovals or blank spaces provided for voting will void this entire ballot.
- (6) Do not overvote. If you select a greater number of candidates than there are vacancies to be filled, your ballot will be void for that public office, party position or proposal.

**STATE OF NEW YORK, COUNTY OF HAMILTON**

- (7) If you tear, deface, or wrongly mark this ballot, return it and obtain another. Do not attempt to correct mistakes on the ballot by making erasures or cross outs. Erasures or cross outs may invalidate all or part of your ballot. Prior to submitting your ballot, if you make a mistake in completing the ballot or wish to change your ballot choices, you may obtain and complete a new ballot. You have a right to a replacement ballot upon return of the original ballot.
- (8) After completing your ballot, insert it into the ballot scanner and wait for the notice that your ballot has been successfully scanned. If no such notice appears, seek the assistance of an election inspector.

Ballot ID: 1001

Arietta  
E.D.(s): 1

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
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**TATIANA COFFINGER,**

a Judge of the County, Family and  
Surrogate's Courts, Hamilton County

---

**MANDATORY: Judge's Home Address**

In the event that a determination of the Commission on Judicial Conduct is made in the above matter requiring transmittal to the Chief Judge and service upon the judge in accordance with Judiciary Law § 44, subd. 7, the Court of Appeals has asked the Commission to provide the judge's home address.

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Judge's Home Address

**OPTIONAL: Request and Authorization to Notify Judge's Attorney of Determination**

In the event that a determination of the Commission on Judicial Conduct is made in the above matter requiring transmittal to the Chief Judge and service upon me in accordance with Judiciary Law § 44, subd. 7, the undersigned judge or justice:

(1) requests and authorizes the Chief Judge to cause a copy of my notification letter from her and a copy of the determination to be sent to my attorney(s) by mail:

---

Attorney's Name, Address, Telephone

(2) requests and authorizes the Clerk of the Commission to transmit this request to the Chief Judge together with the other required papers.

This request and authorization shall remain in force unless and until a revocation in writing by the undersigned judge or justice is received by the Commission.

Dated:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Judge or Justice

Acknowledgment:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Attorney for Judge or Justice

**SEND TO:** Clerk of the Commission  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct  
61 Broadway, Suite 1200  
New York, New York 10006