



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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April 1, 2026

Heather Davis, Esq.
Chief Clerk and Legal Counsel
New York State Court of Appeals
20 Eagle Street
Albany, New York 12207-1095

*Re: Matter of Hon. Walter W. Jones, Justice of the
Canandaigua Town Court, Ontario County*

Dear Ms. Davis:

Thank you for your letter of March 26, 2026, inviting comment by the Commission on Judicial Conduct regarding the Court's consideration of the suspension of Hon. Walter W. Jones from the exercise of the powers of the office of Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court, Ontario County.

The Commission filed a determination dated March 12, 2026, that Judge Jones should be removed from office. Pursuant to Article VI, Section 22(e) of the New York State Constitution, and Section 44(8) of the Judiciary Law, a judge who is the subject of a removal determination filed by the Commission with the Court may be suspended, with or without pay, pending the Court's disposition of the matter pursuant to Section 44(7) of the Judiciary Law.

It is the Commission's view that public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary, the courts and the administration of justice would be undermined were a judge to continue exercising the powers of office while a removal determination against him was before the Court. That is especially true where, as here, the

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misconduct involves a judge who (A) used a racial epithet repeatedly and gratuitously while conversing with a lawyer and court clerk in a public setting, and (B) accused a Black litigant of “playing the race card” in circumstances that additionally evinced “racial animus and insensitivity” and an “apparent lack of awareness of the impact and impropriety of his statements.”¹

Based upon the foregoing, and mindful of the Court’s consistent practice to suspend with pay those judges against whom the Commission has filed a removal determination, the Commission respectfully recommends that Judge Jones be suspended with pay, pending the Court’s final disposition of the matter.

Very truly yours,



Robert H. Tembeckjian

cc: Judges of the Court of Appeals (via Ms. Davis)
Hon. Joseph A. Zayas, Chief Administrative Judge
Charles D. Steinman, Esq.

¹ The quoted language is from page 22 of the Commission’s [determination](#).