



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Judicial Conduct Commission Reports Record Number of Complaints in 2024**

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The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct received 3,353 complaints in 2024 – the most in its history. This represents a 12% increase over the previous record of 2,982 complaints received in 2023, and a 37% increase over the 5-year average of 2,443 complaints per year.

The Commission also rendered 24 public decisions, 16 of which were removals or permanent resignations from office.

The information is reported in the Commission's newly released 2025 Annual Report, covering its activities in 2024, available online at [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).

The Commission also reported the following:

- 537 preliminary inquiries were conducted.<sup>1</sup>
- 363 full-fledged investigations were undertaken: 159 new ones and 204 carried forward from 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined in the Commission rules as the preliminary analysis, clarification and fact-finding activity intended to aid the Commission in determining whether or not to investigate a complaint.

- 11 judges were publicly disciplined: three judges were removed from office, three were censured and five were admonished.
- 13 judges resigned and publicly agreed never to return to judicial office.
- Seven other judges resigned while complaints were pending, where it had not been determined permanent departure from office was warranted or appropriate.<sup>2</sup>
- 23 judges were issued confidential cautionary letters.
- 212 matters were pending at year's end.

Established in the State Constitution as an independent agency in 1978, the Commission evaluates and investigates complaints of misconduct against judges of the state unified court system and, where appropriate, disciplines such judges for ethics violations. Through 2024, it rendered public decisions against 969 judges, including 185 who were removed from office and 144 who resigned and publicly agreed never to return to the bench.

All Commission decisions and the Annual Reports are available on the agency's website: [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).<sup>3</sup>

### **Commentary**

In addition to summaries of the year's public disciplines, confidential cautions and statistics, the 2025 Annual Report comments on (1) pending legislation that would enhance the Commission's ability to hold judges accountable for misconduct they commit; (2) misuse of judicial titles in personal email addresses; and (3) oversight of court-appointed fiduciaries.

### ***Pending Legislation***

A bill passed by the Senate in 2024 (S4398/A4908) included three provisions the Commission has long advocated:

- The Commission would have authority to complete formal disciplinary proceedings and discipline a judge, notwithstanding the judge's departure from office before the proceeding is completed. In the past ten years, 90 judges resigned before proceedings

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<sup>2</sup> The Commission notifies such judges that proceedings would resume were they to return to the bench.

<sup>3</sup> The website and Annual Report also report on cases decided by two predecessor commissions, beginning with a legislatively-created temporary commission on judicial conduct in 1975, whose dockets were carried over to the current Commission.

against them were completed, and statutory confidentiality mandates prohibit the Commission from revealing anything about those matters.

- Commission proceedings would become public when a judge was formally charged with misconduct, rather than remain confidential until the lengthy process is completed and a public discipline is imposed. This is equivalent to the process in 38 other states.
- The Commission's annual budget request would be submitted directly to the Legislature, with comment by the Governor. This would be equivalent to how the court system's budget is handled, and it would recognize the Commission's independence as set forth in the state constitution.

### ***Misuse of Judicial Titles in Personal Email Addresses***

Judges are prohibited from lending the prestige of their office to advance theirs or others' private interests. In 2022, the Commission censured a part-time attorney judge for using the word "judge" in her personal email address which she used to represent clients. Despite declaring that she would change her email address, she did not do so which resulted in a new investigation and her resignation in 2024. The Commission's Annual Report reminds all judges to be careful about the use of their judicial titles when engaged in extra-judicial activities.

### ***Oversight of Court-Appointed Fiduciaries***

The Commission has previously commented on various reforms to the appointment and oversight of court-appointed fiduciaries. It notes that when a fiduciary is believed to have acted wrongfully, and the Commission learns that *a judge* may have been negligent, in the appointment or oversight, it may investigate and hold a judge accountable. In the Annual Report, the Commission suggests that California's fiduciary model may be worth exploring.

### **The Commission's Budget**

The Commission is pleased that Governor Hochul's Executive Budget proposal for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2025, included the Commission requested budget of \$9,330,000 – an increase of \$430,000 from the prior year. The request was intended to cover contractual and other mandated rises in costs, and to fill vacant staff positions.

**Statement by Commission Chair Joseph W. Belluck**

“Faith in the integrity of the courts is fundamental to the rule of law. The work of the Judicial Conduct Commission promotes public confidence in a judiciary that is both independent and accountable. We appreciate the support extended to us by the leaders of all three branches of state government, in our common pursuit of the public interest.”

**Statement by Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian**

“It is not and should not be easy to reprimand or remove a constitutional officer of government. When warranted, however, it is essential to the integrity of public institutions that it be done. The Judicial Conduct Commission strives to promote confidence in the courts, among the judiciary as well as the public, by disciplining those judges who have engaged in misconduct, while exonerating those who have been wrongly accused.”

**Office Addresses**

The Commission’s offices are located at the following addresses:

61 Broadway	Corning Tower, Suite 2301	400 Andrews Street
Suite 1200	Empire State Plaza	Suite 700
New York, NY 10006	Albany, NY 12223	Rochester, NY 14604

**Commission Members**

There are 11 members of the Commission on Judicial Conduct. Four are appointed by the Governor, three by the Chief Judge and four by the leaders of the Legislature. Members serve overlapping 4-year terms and are eligible for re-appointment. The present Commission members are:

Joseph W. Belluck, Esq., <i>Chair</i>	
Taa Grays, Esq., <i>Vice Chair</i>	Hon. Robert J. Miller
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Nina M. Moore, Ph.D.
Stefano Cambareri, Esq.	Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.
Brian C. Doyle, Esq.	Hon. Anil C. Singh
Hon. John A. Falk	Akosua Garcia Yeboah