



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Town Court Justice in St. Lawrence County Should Be Censured for *Ex Parte* Communications and Other Misconduct

The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that Philip J. Gentile, a Justice of the Rossie Town Court, St. Lawrence County, should be censured for initiating unauthorized *ex parte* communications, making injudicious and at times profane statements, and baselessly insinuating that a town justice in a different court had been involved in an affair.

Judge Gentile agreed to the censure.

At various times between November 2022 to March 2024, in connection with a case involving a defendant charged with assault, Judge Gentile (1) spoke privately with the prosecutor and did not disclose the conversation to the defense, (2) denied a defense motion to modify an order of protection after calling and talking about the matter privately with a local school official, and (3) uttered profanities in court.

In January 2023, while conversing with an attorney between cases in his court, Judge Gentile – gratuitously and without evidence – said of a town

official and judge of another community that they “were tight,” “boyfriends and girlfriends [*sic*],” and comparable to characters in the movie *Body Heat*.

In accepting the jointly recommended sanction of censure, the Commission noted that the judge “has acknowledged that his conduct was improper and warrants public discipline.”

Judge Gentile, who is not an attorney, has been a Justice of the Rossie Town Court, since 2018. His current term expires on December 31, 2025.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“It undermines the judicial obligation to be fair and impartial when a judge bases decisions on outside conversations to which one or more parties are not privy and cannot counter. Nor does it enhance the integrity of the court for a judge to utter profanities on the bench or spread baseless gossip about other judges or public officials. The Commission expects Judge Gentile to be more sensitive to these and his other judicial obligations going forward.”

The Commission Proceedings

Judge Gentile was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated March 3, 2025, containing two charges.

On April 24, 2025, the Administrator of the Commission and Judge Gentile and his attorney entered into an Agreed Statement of Facts, stipulating to the facts and sanction and waiving further submissions and oral argument.

The Commission accepted the Agreed Statement on May 1, 2025.

The Commission Determination

The Commission filed a determination dated May 30, 2025, in which all 11 members concurred.

Court of Appeals Review

The Commission transmitted its determination to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7. The Commission was notified on June 11, 2025, that Judge Gentile had received the determination. Consequently, the matter is now public.

A judge may either accept the Commission's determination or, within 30 days from receipt, make a written request to the Chief Judge for a review of the determination by the Court of Appeals.

Pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7, if Judge Gentile does not request review by the Court of Appeals, the Commission will censure him in accordance with the determination.

If a Commission determination is reviewed by the Court of Appeals, the Court may accept the determined sanction, impose a different sanction including admonition, censure or removal, or impose no sanction.

Statistics Relating to Prior Determinations

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 356 determinations of censure against judges in New York State. The Commission has issued 185 determinations of removal and 289 determinations of admonition.

The Commission has accepted 150 permanent resignation stipulations, in which the judge has agreed to leave office and never seek or accept judicial office in the future, since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 102 Commission determinations. The results are available on the Commission's website at "[Appealed Decisions](#)."

Counsel

Judge Gentile was represented by Henry J. Leader of Case & Leader, LLP, 107 E. Main Street, Gouverneur, New York 13642, (315) 287-2000.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Cathleen S. Cenci, Principal Attorney S. Peter Pedrotty and Principal Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Background Information on Judge Gentile

First Took Office: January 1, 2018
Current Term Expires: December 31, 2025

Members of the Commission

The Commission members serve four-year terms. A list of members is noted below.

The Public File

The determination and other records are available on the Commission's website: www.cjc.ny.gov.

MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

| Member | Appointing Authority | Term End |
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