



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Two Town Justices in Jefferson County Should Be Disciplined for Misconduct During Eviction Proceeding

The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that Justices Donald F. Hull and Lucas J. Whitmore of the Antwerp Town Court, Jefferson County, should be censured and admonished, respectively, for their misconduct during a summary eviction proceeding.

Both judges agreed to the public disciplines.

In October 2022, while presiding over the eviction proceeding of a couple who did not have a lawyer, Judge Hull (1) made disrespectful ethnic comments and (2) permitted Judge Whitmore, who had no formal role in the case, to sit near the bench and repeatedly interject himself into the proceeding. Judge Whitmore asked numerous substantive questions and divided the tenants' attention, as if there were two judges presiding.

After ruling to evict the tenants, Judge Hull told them the Department of Social Services would "have to put you up. If they can put Mexicans up in the Taj Mahal..." When one of the tenants called that comment "racist," Judge Whitmore defended Judge Hull by saying he meant to say a "fancy hotel."

Judge Hull then added that he was referring to “New York City” and “Mexicans right now who are flowing out of the border and they’re going right from the border to hotels.”

In its determination censuring Judge Hull, the Commission stated that he “failed to perform his judicial duties without the appearance of bias.” The Commission also found that by allowing Judge Whitmore to participate in the proceeding, Judge Hull “made it appear that there were two judges presiding over the matter,” and gave the “appearance that [Judge Whitmore] had undue influence over him.”

In its determination of admonition of Judge Whitmore, the Commission found that he “breached his ethical obligations” when he “defended and minimized” Judge Hull’s improper statements, and that by interjecting in the proceeding, Judge Whitmore “undermined” Judge Hull’s authority.

Judge Hull has been a Justice of the Antwerp Town Court since 1979. His current term expires on December 31, 2025.¹ Judge Whitmore has been a Justice of the Antwerp Town Court since 2013. His current term expires on December 31, 2028. Neither judge is an attorney.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“In effect, Judges Hull and Whitmore unprofessionally teamed up against two unrepresented tenants in an eviction case, then made or defended insolent remarks about Mexicans, the Taj Mahal and New York City. As such, they failed to be and appear fair, impartial, unbiased and decorous. To their credit, both judges cooperated in the Commission’s inquiry and readily accepted responsibility for their actions.”

¹ Judge Hull was recently re-elected to a four-year term commencing January 1, 2026.

The Commission Proceedings & Determinations

In separate proceedings, Judge Hull and Judge Whitmore were each served with a Formal Written Complaint dated July 8, 2025, containing one charge.

On September 19, 2025, the Administrator of the Commission, Judge Hull and Judge Whitmore, and their attorney, each entered into an Agreed Statement of Facts, stipulating to the facts and sanction and waiving further submissions and oral argument.

The Commission accepted both Agreed Statements on October 30, 2025.

On November 19, 2025, the Commission filed separate determinations for each judge, in which all 11 members concurred in both.

Court of Appeals Review

The Commission transmitted its determinations to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7. The Commission was notified on December 2, 2025, that both Judge Hull and Judge Whitmore had received their determinations. Consequently, the matters are 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 Hull does not request review by the Court of Appeals, the Commission will censure him in accordance with the determination. Likewise, if Judge Whitmore does not request review by the Court, the Commission will admonish 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 358 determinations of censure against judges in New York State. The Commission has issued 185 determinations of removal and 290 determinations of admonition.

The Commission has accepted 157 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

Both Judge Hull and Judge Whitmore were represented by Paul G. Ferrara of Costello, Cooney & Fearon, PLLC, 211 West Jefferson Street, Syracuse, New York 13202, (315) 422-1152.

In both matters, the Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator John J. Postel, Senior Attorney Kathleen Martin and Senior Investigator Betsy Sampson.

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
Joseph W. Belluck, Esq., Chair	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2028
Taa Grays, Esq., Vice Chair	Senate President Pro Tem Andrea Stewart-Cousins	March 31, 2027
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson	March 31, 2028
Stefano Cambareri, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2029
Brian C. Doyle, Esq.	Senate Minority Leader Robert G. Ort	March 31, 2028
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson	March 31, 2029
Robin Chappelle Golston	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2029
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2026
Nina M. Moore, Ph.D.	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2027
Hon. Peter H. Moulton	Chief Judge Rowan D. Wilson	March 31, 2026
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026