



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Rensselaer County Town Court Justice Resigns After Evading Jury Duty by Claiming He Could Not Be Impartial

Richard T. Snyder, a Justice of the Petersburg Town Court, Rensselaer County – who was charged with misconduct by the Commission on Judicial Conduct for evading jury duty by claiming he could not be impartial – has resigned from office and agreed to never return.¹

In November 2024, Judge Snyder was served with a Formal Written Complaint, alleging that in October 2023, in an effort to be excused from Grand Jury duty, he introduced himself as a town justice to the presiding judge and said he could not serve as a Grand Juror because he believed that anyone who comes before him is guilty and therefore he could not be impartial.² Later, when appearing for testimony at the Commission, Judge Snyder repeatedly said that all litigants who appeared before him “did something wrong” and, among other things, “I know they’re guilty because they did something wrong. That’s how they got a ticket,” and “...That’s the reason why they got the ticket to appear in court, because they did something wrong.”

¹ A resignation stipulation was executed on December 30, 2024. The Commission issued an order accepting it on January 30, 2025. The judge’s resignation was effective December 31, 2024.

² The judge presiding over the grand jury empanelment appropriately reported Judge Snyder’s conduct.

Judge Snyder waived the statutory provision of confidentiality applicable to Commission proceedings, to the limited extent that the stipulation and the Commission's order accepting it would be public.

Judge Snyder, who is not an attorney, had served as a Justice of the Petersburg Town Court since 2014. His current term would have expired on December 31, 2025.

The stipulation can be found on the Commission's website: www.cjc.ny.gov.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“It is bad enough that a judge would seek to avoid such a fundamental civic responsibility as jury service. It is astounding that the judge would claim an inability to be impartial, and to declare under oath that the accused must be guilty or they would not be in court. There is no place on the bench for someone who so deeply misunderstands the role of a judge and the administration of justice.”

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 146 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 288 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 352 determinations of censure and 185 determinations of removal.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 102 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 86 cases (77 of which were removals, six were censures and three were admonitions). Of the remaining 16 cases, two sanctions were increased from censure to removal, and 13 were reduced: nine removal determinations were modified to censure, one removal was modified to admonition, two censures were modified to admonition, and one censure was rejected and the charges dismissed. The Court remitted one matter to the Commission for further proceedings.

Counsel

In the proceedings before the Commission, Judge Snyder represented himself.

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The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Cathleen S. Cenci, Senior Attorney Kathleen Klein and Principal Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Background Information on Judge Snyder

First took office: 2014
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 stipulation and order are attached.

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 Wilson	March 31, 2028
Stefano Cambareri, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2025
Brian C. Doyle, Esq.	Senate Minority Leader Robert G. Ort	March 31, 2028
Hon. John A. Falk	Former Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2025
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2026
Nina M. Moore, Ph.D.	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2027
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026
Hon. Anil C. Singh	Chief Judge Rowan Wilson	March 31, 2026
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2025