



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **City Court Judge in Erie County Resigns After Orchestrating a Fraudulent Court Proceeding to Dismiss a Traffic Ticket**

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Louis P. Violanti, an Associate Judge of the Lackawanna City Court, Erie County, resigned from office on January 23, 2025, and agreed to never return, after being charged with misconduct by the Commission on Judicial Conduct for orchestrating a fraudulent court proceeding to dismiss the traffic ticket issued to an acquaintance.<sup>1</sup>

This is the second time Judge Violanti resigned from the Lackawanna City Court. When he did so in 2013, however, it was without a pledge never to return, and before the Commission could remove him from office, which under the State Constitution would have barred him from returning to the bench.

In January 2013, while serving as an Associate Judge of the Lackawanna City Court, Judge Violanti arranged and presided over a sham proceeding in which no prosecutor was present and a police officer impersonated the traffic defendant, with whom the judge was acquainted. Judge Violanti then dismissed the ticket. This conduct resulted in a two-year suspension of his law license by the Appellate

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<sup>1</sup> A resignation stipulation was executed on January 2, 2025. The Commission issued an order accepting it on January 30, 2025. The judge's resignation was effective January 23, 2025.

Division, Fourth Department, which found that his actions constituted “serious misconduct.”

Judge Violanti’s law license was reinstated in March 2016, and he was re-appointed to the bench by the Mayor of Lackawanna in March 2024 for a 6-year term.

Judge Violanti and the Commission’s Administrator entered into a stipulation, waiving 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.

### **The Time Constraints Limiting the Commission’s Options in 2013**

After a judge resigns, the Commission has only 120 days to complete its proceedings and issue a decision to remove the judge from office. That could not be accomplished here without abridging the judge’s due process rights while the attorney grievance process was also underway.<sup>2</sup>

### **The 2024 Commission Proceeding Against Judge Violanti**

Judge Violanti was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated August 12, 2024, and filed an Answer dated September 13, 2024.

Both the Administrator and the Judge made applications to the Commission that were decided on December 12, 2024. The Commission (A) denied Judge Violanti’s motion that the Formal Written Complaint be dismissed and (B) granted the Administrator’s motion for summary determination, sustaining the charge and determining that the judge’s misconduct was established.

The foregoing documents are appended to the resignation stipulation.

Judge Violanti was aware that the Commission’s Administrator would recommend that he be removed from judicial office.

The stipulation can be found on the Commission’s website: [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).

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<sup>2</sup> See Judiciary Law Section 45. There is no authority in law for the Commission to admonish or censure a judge who has resigned. The Commission has long advocated that this arbitrary 120-day limitation be lifted. Last year, the State Senate passed a bill that included such a provision, but the Assembly did not take up or vote on the matter.

**Statement by Commission Administrator**

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“It is outrageous that a judge would orchestrate a court proceeding and produce a transcript with a stand-in pretending to be the defendant, and no prosecutor present, so that a traffic ticket could be fixed. Had the Commission not been constrained by time limits in the law, the judge would have been removed in 2013 and constitutionally ineligible to return. Instead, a decade later he came back, only to face discipline and agree to the inevitable: permanent departure from the bench.”

**Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions**

The Commission has accepted 147 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**

Judge Violanti was represented by Rodney O. Personius of Personius Melber, LLP, 2100 Main Place Tower, 350 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14202, (716) 855-1050.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator John J. Postel, Senior Attorney David M. Duguay and Senior Investigator Vanessa Mangan.

**Background Information on Judge Violanti**

Judicial Tenure:

First term:

May 2007 – March 2013

Second term:

March 2024 - January 2025

Current term would have expired:

February 28, 2030

Year Admitted to NYS Bar:

2000

**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**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Term End</b>
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