



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Previously Disciplined Town Justice in Madison County Resigns While Under Investigation for Financial and Administrative Deficiencies

Robert W. Engle, a Justice of the Madison Town Court, Madison County – who was previously disciplined twice by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct – resigned while under investigation again by the Commission.

Judge Engle was apprised that the Commission was investigating complaints alleging that (1) he failed to make mandatory reports and remittances of official funds to the State Comptroller in a timely manner, (2) failed to record all proceedings as required by law, and (3) failed to administer his court effectively.

Judge Engle resigned from judicial office effective April 30, 2022, and agreed never to seek or accept judicial office at any time in the future. The Commission accepted a stipulation to that effect signed by the judge and the Commission's Administrator and closed its investigation.¹

¹ The Stipulation was signed on April 22, 2022. The Commission accepted it and issued an order closing the matter on May 5, 2022.

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

Judge Engle, who is not an attorney, had been a Justice of the Madison Town Court since 1990. His current term would have expired on December 31, 2025.

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

Prior Discipline

Judge Engle was previously disciplined by the Commission twice.²

In 1997 he was censured for writing a letter on judicial stationery on behalf of a defendant to the presiding judge and District Attorney, vouching for the defendant's character, referring repeatedly to his judicial office, and denigrating the police officer and probation official involved in the case.

In 2009, Judge Engle was admonished for sending fine notices to three defendants without a trial or guilty plea, sending payment notices to two other defendants who had already paid their fines, and improperly initiating the suspension of defendants' driver's licenses in six cases.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Town and village justices are required to make regular reports and deposits of court-collected funds. They are also required to make audio recordings of all proceedings. Even where there is no evidence of theft, suspicion is naturally fueled when public monies are not fully and timely remitted, and court proceedings are not properly recorded. After two prior public reprimands, this new inquiry appropriately led to Judge Engle's resignation.”

² <https://cjc.ny.gov/Determinations/E/Engle.Robert.W.1997.02.04.DET.pdf>;
<https://cjc.ny.gov/Determinations/E/Engle.Robert.2009.11.09.DET.pdf>

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 115 such permanent resignation stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has also issued 280 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 342 determinations of censure and 177 determinations of removal.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 101 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 85 cases (76 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 Engle represented himself.

The Commission was represented by Robert H. Tembeckjian, Administrator and Counsel to the Commission; John J. Postel, Deputy Administrator in Charge of the Rochester office; and Senior Attorney M. Kathleen Martin. Senior Investigator Betsy Sampson was assigned to the case.

Background Information on Judge Engle

First Took Office:	1990
Current Term Expires:	December 31, 2025

Members of the Commission

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

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	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2024
Taa Grays, Esq., Vice Chair	Senate President Pro Tem Andrea Stewart-Cousins	March 31, 2023
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2024
Jodie Corngold	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2023
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2025
Hon. Angela M. Mazzarelli	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	December 31, 2022 ³
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026
Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq.	Former Senate Minority Leader John J. Flanagan	March 31, 2024
Graham B. Seiter, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2025
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2025
Vacant	Governor	March 31, 2026

³ Judge Mazzarelli's term on the Commission will end upon her retirement from judicial office on December 31, 2022.