



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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## NEWS RELEASE

*February 5, 2021*

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### **Town Justice in Sullivan County Resigns After Being Charged with Presiding Despite Disqualifying Conflicts**

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Fallsburg Town Court Justice Amanda R. Ward (Sullivan County) has resigned after being served with formal charges by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct for, among other things, presiding notwithstanding a disqualifying conflict with a party or witness and failing to disclose and/or recuse herself as required. Judge Ward resigned from office effective October 31, 2020, 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, her attorney, and the Commission's Administrator and closed its formal proceeding.<sup>1</sup>

Judge Ward 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 Ward, who is not an attorney, had been a Justice of the Fallsburg Town Court since 2015. Her current term would have expired on December 31, 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> The judge was served with a Formal Written Complaint on November 13, 2020. The Stipulation was signed on January 25, 2021. The Commission accepted it and issued an order closing the matter on January 28, 2021.

The stipulation and the Commission's order closing the case can be found on the Commission's website: [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).

### **Statement by Commission Administrator**

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Judges are disqualified by promulgated ethics rules from presiding over cases in which their ‘impartiality might reasonably be questioned.’ In certain instances, if they disclose the disqualifying interest, the parties may agree to waive the judge’s recusal. On being charged with presiding and not disclosing conflicts with a party or witness, Judge Ward agreed never to be a judge again.”

### **Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions**

The Commission has accepted 99 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 276 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 337 determinations of censure and 175 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**

Judge Ward was represented by Stephen R. Coffey of O’Connell & Aronowitz, 54 State Street, Albany, New York 12207, (518) 462-5601.

The Commission was represented by Robert H. Tembeckjian, Administrator and Counsel to the Commission; Mark Levine, Deputy Administrator in Charge of the New York office; and Staff Attorney Stella Gilliland. Investigator Andrew Fenwick was assigned to the case.

**Background Information on Judge Ward**

First Took Office: 2015  
 Current Term Expires: December 31, 2023

**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. They are also available for inspection during regular business hours at the Commission's three offices:

61 Broadway Suite 1200 New York, New York 10006	Corning Tower, Suite 2301 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12223	400 Andrews Street Suite 700 Rochester, New York 14604
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**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 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	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2023
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2021
Paul B. Harding, Esq.	Former Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb	March 31, 2021
Hon. Angela M. Mazzarelli	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2022
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2022
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2022
Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq.	Former Senate Minority Leader John J. Flanagan	March 31, 2024
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2021