



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN
ADMINISTRATOR & COUNSEL

CORNING TOWER, SUITE 2301
EMPIRE STATE PLAZA
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12223

MARISA E. HARRISON
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

518-453-4600 518-299-1757
TELEPHONE FACSIMILE
www.cjc.ny.gov

NEWS RELEASE

December 11, 2023

Contact:	<i>Marisa E. Harrison, Public Information Officer (518) 453-4600</i>
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Broome County Town Court Justice Resigns While Charged with Physically Accosting a DMV Clerk

John P. Orzel, a Justice of the Triangle Town Court, Broome County – who among other things was formally charged by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct for repeatedly poking a female clerk on the shoulder during an argument he initiated – has agreed to leave office and never return.¹

In September 2023, Judge Orzel was served with a Formal Written Complaint, alleging that he:

1. Initiated a public argument in the courtroom with a female clerk from the Broome County Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) who was operating a DMV mobile office in the courtroom;
2. Made inappropriate, unwanted physical contact with the clerk by repeatedly poking her on her left shoulder with his finger; and
3. Made snide and/or otherwise discourteous remarks to her before complaining about her to her supervisors.

¹ A resignation stipulation was formalized on November 28, 2023. The Commission issued an order accepting it on December 7, 2023. The judge's resignation is effective at 12:00AM on January 1, 2024.

Judge Orzel 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 Orzel, who is not an attorney, has served as a Justice of the Triangle Town Court since 2018. 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 dismaying that a judge would provoke an argument and physically accost a government clerk who was simply doing her job. This entirely unnecessary and avoidable confrontation has ended appropriately with Judge Orzel's permanent departure from the bench.”

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 130 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 283 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 349 determinations of censure and 179 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 Orzel represented himself.

*December 11, 2023**Page 3*

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

Background Information on Judge Orzel

First took office: 2018
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, 2027
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Former Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2024
Brian C. Doyle, Esq.	Senate Minority Leader Robert G. Ort	March 31, 2024
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	Governor Kathy Hochul	March 31, 2027
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026
Graham B. Seiter, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2025
Hon. Anil C. Singh	Chief Judge Rowan Wilson	March 31, 2026
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2025