



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Town Justice in Columbia County Resigns While Under Investigation

Jessica Byrne, a Justice of the New Lebanon Town Court, Columbia County, resigned while under investigation by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

In March 2024, the Commission apprised Judge Byrne that it was investigating four complaints that, among other things, alleged that she:

- Dismissed traffic tickets issued to some of her relatives;
- Retaliated against a former court clerk for cooperating with the Commission's investigation; and
- Inappropriately criticized the local dog control officer regarding a pending case, and intervened in a matter involving the officer's spouse despite being disqualified from the matter.

Judge Byrne, who denied the allegations, resigned from office on July 29, 2024, 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.¹

¹ The Stipulation was signed on September 17, 2024. The Commission issued an order accepting it on September 19, 2024.

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

Judge Byrne, who is an attorney, had been a Justice of the New Lebanon Town Court since 2010. Her current term would have expired on December 31, 2025.

The stipulation and the Commission's order 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.

“For a judge to engineer the dismissal of traffic tickets issued to relatives, and to retaliate against court staff who cooperate with official inquiries into such allegations, undermines public confidence in the integrity of the courts. The Commission takes such matters seriously and does its best to resolve them appropriately.”

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 139 such permanent resignation stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has also issued 284 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. One request for review is currently pending.

Counsel

In the proceedings before the Commission, Judge Byrne represented herself.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Cathleen S. Cenci, Staff Attorney Shruti Joshi, and Senior Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Background Information on Judge Byrne

First took office: 2010
 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