



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Oneida County Town Court Justice Resigns After Being Formally Charged with Misconduct**

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Kevin E. Copeland, a Justice of the New Hartford Town Court, Oneida County - who was charged by the Commission on Judicial Conduct with receiving unemployment benefits to which he was not entitled – has resigned from office and agreed to never return.<sup>1</sup>

In July 2024, Judge Copeland was served with a Formal Written Complaint, alleging that the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) found that the judge made a “factually false statement” and “concealed...pertinent” information regarding his compensation as a judge which resulted in his receiving nearly \$14,000 in unemployment insurance benefits to which he was not entitled.<sup>2</sup> He repaid the money after the DOL findings.

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<sup>1</sup> A resignation stipulation was formalized on October 16, 2024. The Commission issued an order accepting it on October 24, 2024. The judge’s resignation is effective October 31, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Between March 2020 and March 2021, on at least 17 weekly certifications to the DOL, the judge certified that he worked zero days, when he had in fact worked at least one day, either performing his regular judicial duties or presiding over off-hours arraignments through the Centralized Arraignment Part in Oneida County. The judge asserted that the overpaid benefits were based on a misunderstanding during the pandemic.

Judge Copeland 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 Copeland, who is not an attorney, has served as a Justice of the New Hartford Town Court since 2014. His current term would have expired on December 31, 2025.

The stipulation 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.

“While part-time justices are permitted to hold other jobs, they must take care to follow the rules on such matters as unemployment benefits, lest they undermine public confidence in the judiciary by collecting money to which they are not entitled.”

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

The Commission has accepted 142 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 285 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**

Judge Copeland was represented by Robert F. Julian, 2037 Genesee Street, Suite 2, Utica, New York 13501, (315) 797-5610.

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

### **Background Information on Judge Copeland**

First took office: 2014  
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**

| <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  |