



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Westchester County Supreme Court Justice Should Be Admonished for Supporting Friends' Pistol Permit Applications and Other Misconduct

The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that Supreme Court Justice Thomas Quinones (Westchester County) should be admonished for identifying himself as a judge on two pistol permit character reference letters, engaging in improper, undisclosed *ex parte* communications, and failing to timely file his financial disclosure statement.

Judge Quinones agreed to the admonition.

In 2022 Judge Quinones completed two Character Reference Letters on behalf of two family friends who were applying for pistol licenses, identifying himself as a "Supreme Court Justice" employed in the "NYS Courts." He later sent a letter to the Westchester County Clerk Pistol Licensing Division, rescinding the reference letters.

In August 2022, Judge Quinones called a plaintiff's attorney, had a prohibited one-on-one conversation about a pending case the attorney had before him, then failed to disclose the conversation to the other side.

Finally, Judge Quinones failed to file his 2021 financial disclosure statement on time, prompting two notices that it was overdue. He eventually filed it more than three months late.

In accepting the jointly recommended sanction of admonition, the Commission considered that the judge “acknowledged that his conduct was improper and warrants public discipline.”

Judge Quinones has been a Justice of the Supreme Court, Westchester County, since 2022. His current term expires on December 31, 2035.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Public confidence in the courts is compromised when a judge’s title is invoked for a private benefit, such as a friend’s pistol permit application. It is likewise undermined when a judge has an unauthorized conversation with one party’s lawyer without telling the other side. To his credit, Judge Quinones accepted responsibility and agreed that public discipline was warranted.”

The Commission Proceedings

Judge Quinones was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated May 15, 2024, containing three charges and filed an Answer dated June 27, 2024.

On August 16, 2024, the Administrator of the Commission and Judge Quinones entered into an Agreed Statement of Facts, stipulating to the facts and sanction and waiving further submissions and oral argument.

The Commission accepted the Agreed Statement on September 19, 2024.

The Commission Determination

The Commission filed a determination dated October 3, 2024, in which nine members concurred: Joseph W. Belluck, Esq. (the Commission Chair), Taa Grays, Esq. (the Vice Chair), Judge Fernando M. Camacho, Stefano

Cambareri, Esq., Brian C. Doyle, Esq., Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq., Judge Anil C. Singh and Akosua Garcia Yeboah.

One member, Nina M. Moore, Ph.D., voted to reject the Agreed Statement on the basis that a letter of caution was the appropriate disposition.

Another member, Judge Robert J. Miller did not participate.

Court of Appeals Review

The Commission transmitted its determination to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7. The Commission was notified on October 10, 2024, that Judge Quinones had received the determination. Consequently, the matter is now public.

A judge may either accept the Commission's determination or, within 30 days from receipt, make a written request to the Chief Judge for a review of the determination by the Court of Appeals.

Pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7, if Judge Quinones does not request review by the Court of Appeals, the Commission will admonish him in accordance with the determination.

If a Commission determination is reviewed by the Court of Appeals, the Court may accept the determined sanction, impose a different sanction including admonition, censure or removal, or impose no sanction.

Statistics Relating to Prior Determinations

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 285 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State. The Commission has issued 185 determinations of removal and 352 determinations of censure.

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 Quinones was represented by Richard E. Grayson, 15 Fisher Lane, 2nd Floor, White Plains, New York 10603, (914) 682-0037.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Mark Levine, Senior Attorney Vickie Ma and Investigators Christina Partida and Andy Fenwick.

Background Information on Judge Quinones

First Took Office:	2022
Current Term Expires:	December 31, 2035
Year Admitted to the NYS Bar:	1990

Members of the Commission

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

The Public File

The determination and other records are available on the Commission's website: www.cjc.ny.gov.

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