

Judicial Review Council

At a Glance

Mark D. Phillips, Esq. Chairperson

Established – 1969

Statutory Authority – Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 51-51g to 51 – 51u

Central Office – 505 Hudson Street, Hartford, CT 06106

Number of Employees – 1 full time – 1 part-time

Recurring operations expenses – Personnel, \$ 113,519.49 Other expenses – \$8,279.73

Organizational structure –The Judicial Review Council is composed of the following members appointed by the Governor with the approval of the General Assembly:

- a. Three judges of the Superior Court, who are not also judges of the Supreme Court;
- b. Three attorneys-at-law admitted to practice in this state;
- c. Six persons who are not judges or attorneys-at-law;
- d. One alternate who is a compensation commissioner who shall serve in lieu of a judge, as designated by the executive director, when the subject of the complaint or investigation is a compensation commissioner;
- e. One alternate who is a family support magistrate who shall serve in lieu of a judge, as designated by the executive director, when the subject of the complaint or investigation is a family support magistrate;
- f. Two alternates who are judges of the Superior Court, who are not also judges of the Supreme Court, who shall serve at probable cause hearings and public hearings in lieu of a member who is a judge when such member is absent or disqualified, as designated by the chairperson of the Council;
- g. Two alternates who are attorneys-at-law, admitted to practice in this state, who shall serve at probable cause hearings and public hearings in lieu of a member who is an attorney-at-law when such member is absent or disqualified, as designated by the chairperson of the Council;
- h. Three alternates who are not judges or attorneys-at-law, who shall serve at probable cause hearings and public hearings in lieu of a member who is a person who is not a judge or attorney-at-law when such member is absent or disqualified, as designated by the chairperson of the Council.

Mission

To investigate and resolve complaints alleging misconduct, disability, or substance abuse of state judges, family support magistrates, and workers' compensation commissioners in order to promote public confidence in the courts and the integrity and independence of the judiciary by ensuring high standards of judicial conduct on and off the bench.

Statutory Responsibility

The Judicial Review Council investigates and resolves complaints or internal referrals about state judges, family support magistrates, and workers' compensation commissioners regarding misconduct, disability, or substance abuse. It consists of 12 regular members and 13 alternates. Six regular members and three alternates are members of the general public; judges and attorneys are each represented by three regular members and two alternates. Commissioners and family support magistrates are each represented by three alternates (CGS § 51-51k).

When a complaint is processed, the council investigates to determine whether probable cause exists to believe that judicial misconduct has occurred. The investigation is confidential unless the judicial officer being investigated ("the respondent") request that it be public.

The council dismisses a complaint when it does not find probable cause. It issues an admonishment if there is no misconduct but the judicial officer acted in a manner that (1) created the appearance of impropriety or (2) constitutes an unfavorable judicial practice. If the council finds probable cause, the council holds a public hearing. If the judicial officer is found guilty of misconduct, the council may impose a range of sanctions such as public censure; suspension without pay for up to one year; recommend suspension or removal from office to the state Supreme Court or the Governor, as applicable; or exonerate the judicial officer from all charges.

Public Service

The council received 65 conduct complaints during the 2018-2019 fiscal year. 60 conduct complaints were disposed of during the period. 11 conduct complaints pending at end of period. Of the 60 complaints; 50 were dismissed after investigation as no factual basis. 7 dismissed as being barred by statute of limitations. 1 Private admonishment after investigation and 2 Public censure ordered after public hearing.

Improvements/Achievements FY 2018-2019

Governor Dannel Malloy appointed new Council Members Mark D. Phillips Esq., as the Chairperson, Honorable James Abrams, as a Superior Court Judge, Honorable Laura Baldini and Honorable Anna Ficeto as alternate Superior Court Judges, Attorney Richard T. Meehan, Esq. as alternate Attorney Member and Samantha P. Rosenberg, as an alternate Public Member.

Information Reported as required by State Statute

The Council operates and will continue to operate in accordance with Sec. 51-51g et seq. of the General Statutes of Connecticut.

Membership - Mark D. Phillips, Esq., Chairman, Hon. James Abrams, Hon. Hillary Strackbein, (Vacancy), Russell L. London, Esq., Genea O. Bell, Esq., Motkue Bowles, Peter Nathan, Richard Smith, William Dyson, Lawrence Goldman, (Vacancy), Hon. Laura Baldini, Hon. Anna Ficeto, Mark Leighton, Esq., Richard Meehan, Esq., (Former Chair), Samantha Rosenberg, (Vacancy), (Vacancy), (Vacancy), Hon. Frederic Gilman, (Vacancy), Comm. Scott A. Barton, Comm. Randy Cohen and Comm. Jodi Gregg.