

Judicial Review Council

At a Glance

Mitchell R. Harris, 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, \$72,270.37; Other expenses – \$6,309.16

Organizational structure –The Judicial Review Council is composed of 12 regular members and 13 alternate members appointed by the Governor with the approval of the General Assembly. (CGS § 51-51k.) The Council's statutory membership is as follows:

- 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. Three alternate members who are workers compensation commissioners.
- e. Three alternate members are family support magistrates.
- f. Two alternate members who are judges of the Superior Court, who are not also judges of the Supreme Court.
- g. Two alternate members who are attorneys-at-law, admitted to practice in this state.
- h. Three alternate members who are not judges or attorneys-at-law.

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. The Council also adjudicates the disability retirement of state's attorneys and public defenders.

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. The Council also has the responsibility for determining whether a judge, certain state's attorneys, or certain public defenders should be retired if he or she cannot adequately perform the duties of the office due to permanent incapacity.

When a complaint referral is processed, the Council conducts an investigation to determine whether probable cause exists to believe that misconduct within the Council's jurisdiction has occurred. The investigation is confidential unless the judicial officer being investigated request that it be public.

The Council dismisses a complaint when it does not find probable cause. It may issue 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 to have engaged in misconduct, the Council may impose a range of sanctions such as public censure; suspension without pay for up to one year; or a recommendation to the state Supreme Court or the Governor, as applicable, that the judicial officer be suspended or removed from office. If the judicial officer is found not to have engaged in misconduct, the Council may exonerate the judicial officer from all charges.

The Council received 80 complaints during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. During this period, the Council disposed of 78 complaints. Six complaints were pending at end of the fiscal year. Of the 78 complaints disposed of: 68 were dismissed after investigation as lacking a factual basis; nine were dismissed after investigation as being barred by the statute of limitations; and one was withdrawn by the complainant.

Membership Changes in Fiscal Year 2020-2021

In Fiscal Year 2020-2021, Governor Ned Lamont appointed to the Council: The Honorable Salvatore C. Agati; Joaquina Borges King, Esq.; and Robert Bouvier and Jia Luo.

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 – Mitchell R. Harris, Esq. Chairman; Hon. Maureen D. Dennis; Hon. James Abrams; Hon. Salvatore C. Agati; Mark D. Phillips, Esq.; Joaquina Borges King, Esq., Motkue Bowles; Peter Nathan; Richard Smith; Robert Bouvier; and Jia Luo. The Council's alternate members are: Hon. Laura F. Baldini; Hon. Anna Ficeto; Family Support Magistrate Hon. Michael L. Ferguson; Family Support Magistrate Hon. Anthony P. Fusco; Workers Compensation Commissioner Scott A. Barton; Workers Compensation Commissioner Randy Lynn Cohen; and Workers Compensation Commissioner Jodi Murray Gregg. The following alternate member positions are vacant: one family support magistrate; two attorneys-at-law; and three persons who are not judges or attorneys-at-law.

