



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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## NEWS RELEASE

*June 20, 2018*

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### **Schenectady County Town Court Justice, Facing Removal, To Resign Amid Inquiry into Financial Irregularities**

The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct announced that Deanna Siegel, a Justice of the Duanesburg Town Court, Schenectady County, who will resign from office effective June 29, 2018, has 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 and closed its formal proceedings.<sup>1</sup>

Judge Siegel entered into the stipulation after being apprised that the Commission's Administrator would recommend her removal from office.

Judge Siegel was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated May 15, 2017, containing two charges alleging *inter alia* that she (1) repeatedly failed to timely report or remit court funds to the State Comptroller and the Town of Duanesburg

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<sup>1</sup> The Stipulation was signed on June 6, 2018. The Commission accepted it on June 13, 2018, and thereafter issued an Order closing the matter.

as required by multiple statutes and despite numerous reminders to do so; and (2) failed to cooperate with the Commission's investigation of the Comptroller's complaint, in that she failed to respond to numerous letters from the Commission and failed to appear for testimony regarding her alleged failure to report and remit funds. A referee designated by the Commission conducted a hearing and issued a report that sustained the two charges.

In March 2018, Judge Siegel, who is a lawyer, was advised that the Commission was investigating a new complaint alleging that she had failed since March 2017 to re-register as an attorney or to pay the required biennial registration fee. Although Judge Siegel did not respond to the Commission's inquiry, she has since re-registered and paid her biennial registration fee.

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

The stipulation and the Commission's order closing the case can be found on the Commission's website: [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).

### **The Commission Proceedings**

Judge Siegel was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated May 15, 2017, containing two charges. Judge Siegel filed an Answer dated June 6, 2017.

The Commission designated Hon. Stewart A. Rosenwasser as referee to hear and report proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. A hearing was held on October 16, 2017.

After the parties submitted post-hearing briefs, the referee issued a report dated March 12, 2018, in which he sustained both charges. The Commission set a schedule for briefs, and oral argument was calendared for June 14, 2018, but in light of the resignation stipulation, further proceedings are unnecessary.

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

The Commission has accepted 75 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 268 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 321 determinations of censure and 171 determinations of removal.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 97 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 81 cases (72 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. Two requests for review are pending.

### **Statement by Commission Administrator**

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Public confidence in the courts requires that town and village justices scrupulously account for and timely remit all fines, fees, bail and other official funds in their care. Judges must also cooperate with Judicial Conduct Commission inquiries. Failure to do either is bad enough. Failure to do both is likely to end with the judge off the bench.”

### **Counsel**

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

The Commission was represented by Robert H. Tembeckjian, Administrator and Counsel to the Commission; Cathleen S. Cenci, Deputy Administrator in Charge of the Albany office; and Staff Attorney Eteena J. Tadjioqueu. Senior Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick assisted in the investigation.

### **Background Information on Judge Siegel**

First took office:	2015
Current Term Expires:	December 31, 2020
Year Admitted to NYS Bar:	1985
Salary:	\$15,997 (Source: 2018 Town of Duanesburg Budget)

### **Members of the Commission**

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

**The Public File**

The stipulation and order are attached. They are also available for inspection during regular business hours at the Commission's three offices:

61 Broadway Suite 1200 New York, New York 10006	Corning Tower, Suite 2301 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12223	400 Andrews Street Suite 700 Rochester, New York 14604
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**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 Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2020
Paul B. Harding, Esq., Vice Chair	Assembly Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb	March 31, 2021
Jodie Corngold	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2019
Taa Grays, Esq.	Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins	March 31, 2020
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2021
Hon. Leslie G. Leach	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2020
Hon. Angela M. Mazzarelli	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2022
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2022
Richard A. Stoloff, Esq.	Former Senate President Pro Tem Dean Skelos	March 31, 2019
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2021
Vacant	Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2022