



Press Release

April 6, 2011

TO: Media/Press

FROM: Judicial Conduct Board

SUBJECT: April 4, 2011 Board Meeting

Harrisburg. On Monday, April 4, 2011, the members of the Judicial Conduct Board conducted their bi-monthly meeting at the Board's offices in the Pennsylvania Judicial Center, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, Ste. 3500, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The Board authorized Chief Counsel to take the following actions:

1. File formal charges against two judicial officers in the Court of Judicial Discipline. This authorization is addition to previous authorization granted by the Board to Chief Counsel to file formal charges against two other judicial officers.
2. Issue letters of caution to two judicial officers. A letter of caution is a private warning from the Board to a judicial officer about conduct that could lead to judicial discipline if not corrected. The purpose of a letter of caution is a constructive "wake-up" call to a judge accused of relatively minor inappropriate behavior.
3. Issue a request to a judicial officer to submit to a mental health evaluation.
4. Issue a cease and desist letter to a candidate for judicial office who was soliciting funds for that judicial office inappropriately.
5. Issue notices of full investigation to five judicial officers. A notice of full investigation provides to a judicial officer notice of an investigation into a matter that the Board feels could result in the filing of charges in the Court of Judicial Discipline. The notice of full investigation permits a judicial officer to respond to the allegations of improper behavior presented to the Board about that judicial officer.
6. Issue formal letters of inquiry to two judicial officers. A letter of inquiry is a formal method for the Board to obtain information from a judicial officer regarding allegations of that judicial officer's improper behavior without filing a notice of full investigation.

The Board dismissed complaints pending against two judicial officers after full investigation of the allegations contained within the certified requests.

The Board dismissed complaints pending against three judicial officers after preliminary inquiry. A complaint is dismissed by the Board after preliminary inquiry if the allegations against the judicial officer are out of the Board's jurisdiction, are unfounded or not provable, or if the judicial officer gave an adequate explanation of the conduct alleged.

The Board opened one anonymous complaint, which was joined with a previously-opened certified complaint.

The Board voted to make public upon receipt the recommendation and report on the judicial conduct system in Pennsylvania prepared by the Standing Committee on Professional Discipline of the American Bar Association.

The Board recognizes its key role in safeguarding and enhancing the integrity of Pennsylvania's Judiciary, and it understands that it must balance the public's right to information about its efforts to better serve that role with its duty to maintain its constitutional mandate of confidentiality. The Board respects and welcomes responsible and constructive public comment from the citizenry of Pennsylvania, whom the Board is privileged to serve.

Contact

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For more information about the Judicial Conduct Board, please visit our website at www.jcbpa.org.

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