



Press Release

March 11, 2015

TO: Media/Press

FROM: Judicial Conduct Board

**SUBJECT: Jennifer J. Rega
Magisterial District Judge
Magisterial District Court 40-3-03
Indiana County
Complaint Nos. 2014-619, 2014-742, 2014-749**

Harrisburg. Following investigation into a number of complaints filed against Magisterial District Judge Jennifer J. Rega, Magisterial District Court 40-3-03 stemming from a September 13, 2014 traffic accident, the Judicial Conduct Board voted to resolve the complaints by issuing a Letter of Counsel to the magisterial district judge.

The Board issues Letters of Counsel in cases where there is sufficient evidence of judicial misconduct to warrant the filing of charges in the Court of Judicial Discipline, but the evidence suggests that the misconduct by the judge was an isolated incident or first-time infraction. Evidence of genuine remorse is weighed heavily by the Board in its decision whether to issue a Letter of Counsel or to file formal charges. A Letter of Counsel may be private or public and is subject to the judicial officer's acceptance of the Letter and its terms. The conduct at issue in a matter resolved by a Letter of Counsel can be used as evidence against the judicial officer in future complaints before the Court of Judicial Discipline, if the judicial officer is charged by the Board in the Court for subsequent misconduct.

Contact

Robert A. Graci, Chief Counsel

The Letter of Counsel, Consent, and Waiver of Confidentiality are attached.

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

END



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
JUDICIAL CONDUCT BOARD**

PENNSYLVANIA JUDICIAL CENTER
601 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE, SUITE 3500
P.O. Box 62525
HARRISBURG, PA 17106-2525
WWW.JCBPA.ORG

HONORABLE ROBERT A. GRACI
CHIEF COUNSEL

717-234-7911

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Jennifer J. Rega
c/o John Summers, Esquire
Hangley, Aronchick, Segal, Pudlin & Schiller
One Logan Square
18th & Cherry Streets, 27th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103-6933

Re: JCB Complaint Nos. 2014-619; 2014-742; 2014-749

Dear Judge Rega:

At its most recent meeting, the Board reviewed and considered the allegations presented in the above-captioned complaints and voted on a final disposition.

The Board has available to it a procedure by which it may resolve a complaint filed against a judicial officer with the issuance of a document known as a "Letter of Counsel." The Board offers a Letter of Counsel dismissal to a judicial officer when the Board decides that, although a judge has breached Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges or the Pennsylvania Constitution, the judge's actions, though serious, do not warrant the Board's filing of formal charges in the Court of Judicial Discipline. In some instances, the Letter of Counsel dismissal is also conditioned on the judge undertaking other remedial actions. In your case, the Board has conditioned the resolution of the above-captioned complaints on your agreement that this Letter of Counsel will be made public.

In order to receive a Letter of Counsel, a judicial officer must consent in writing and stipulate that the Letter of Counsel may be used against the judge during future Board proceedings if new complaints are lodged with the Board against that same judicial officer. As part of this consent, the judicial officer acknowledges that the Board may also utilize a Letter of Counsel in public proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline or the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania if it directs that action is to be taken on any future complaints against the judicial officer before either Court.

The above-mentioned complaints alleged that, during the early morning hours of September 13, 2014, you were engaged in a two-vehicle traffic accident on Route 286 near Diamondville Road in Cherry Hill Township. You claimed that you were unaware that the accident occurred. After following you, the occupants of the other vehicle got you to stop your vehicle. One of the occupants of the other vehicle approached you and an argument ensued. After you were told that the police were going to be called, you left the scene. You, through your attorney, reported the accident to the police the following day. Ultimately, you were charged with a number of criminal offenses stemming from the accident and your subsequent act of leaving the scene at ***Commonwealth v. Jennifer J. Rega***, MDJ-40301-CR-268-2014. These criminal charges were prosecuted by the Office of Attorney General (OAG). After you waived your preliminary hearing, the OAG approved your request for admission into the Accelerated Rehabilitative Disposition (ARD) program. You were admitted into the ARD program, and you are currently following the requirements imposed upon you by the ARD program. It is expected that the criminal charges pending against you will be dismissed by your successful completion of the ARD program.

Despite the manner in which your criminal charges were resolved, the Board was troubled by the findings it made in the course of its investigation. Specifically, the Board was most troubled by its conclusion that you left the scene of the accident and did not immediately report it, in part, to avoid being cited for driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) because you had consumed a quantity of alcohol prior to the accident. As you acknowledged during the course of the Board's investigation, your conduct during the early morning hours of September 13, 2014, and the ensuing criminal charges, as reported in the media, had a more deleterious effect on the reputation of the Commonwealth's judiciary than the DUI charge that you had hoped to avoid by leaving the scene of the accident. The Board concluded that this case involved clear violations of the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges and the Pennsylvania Constitution. Specifically, the Board concluded that your conduct ran afoul of the following:

**Rule 2: Impropriety and Appearance of Impropriety
to be Avoided [...]**

- A. Magisterial District Judges shall respect and comply with the law and shall conduct themselves at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.

Article V, § 17(b) of the Pennsylvania Constitution, as an automatic, derivative violation of Rule 2(A); Art. V, § 17(b) provides that "justices of the peace [(magisterial district judges)] shall be governed by rules or canons which shall be prescribed by the Supreme Court."

Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Pennsylvania Constitution, which provides that judges shall not engage in conduct that "brings the judicial office into disrepute, whether or not the conduct occurred while acting in a judicial capacity or is prohibited by law[.]"

In deliberating on this matter, the Board considered your thorough cooperation with its investigation and your apology and acceptance of responsibility. The Board also acknowledged that you have been compliant with the requirements imposed on you by the ARD program and that your criminal charges stemming from the September 13, 2014 accident will likely be dismissed upon your successful completion of the ARD program.

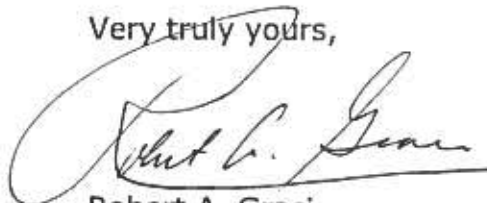
Although the Board understands your position on your misconduct and appreciates the mitigating factors in this case, it was, nonetheless, gravely concerned about the seriousness of the misconduct itself. Judges are held to a higher standard of conduct than average citizens. **See** Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges, Rule 2(A) note ("Magisterial district judges...must expect to be the subject of constant public scrutiny. They must therefore accept restrictions on their conduct that might be viewed as burdensome by the ordinary citizen and should do so freely and willingly."). The acts described above are simply unacceptable and inappropriate for any judge. However, in light of your expression of contrition and for other considerations attendant to this complaint, the Board agreed to offer you the opportunity to resolve this complaint through the acceptance of this public Letter of Counsel. Of course, should you fail to comply with the requirements imposed upon you by the ARD program or if you otherwise fail to successfully complete or if you are removed from the ARD program or should you engage in other acts of judicial misconduct, the Board may revisit this matter and seek appropriate disciplinary action based upon the matters described in this Letter.

By accepting this resolution, you consent to a dismissal of this case through the procedure outlined above. You are directed to meet with me at the Board's offices located in the Pennsylvania Judicial Center, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, and to personally sign an original Statement of Consent and Waiver of Confidentiality, such as is contained at the end of this letter. The Board will retain the original Statement of Consent and Waiver of Confidentiality (attached to a copy of this Letter of Counsel) for its file. Thereafter, the above-complaint numbers will be dismissed. You may indicate your acceptance to resolve this matter by this procedure by informing the Board, in writing, within 7 days of your receipt of this Letter.

Honorable Jennifer J. Rega
Page 4 of 4
February 10, 2015

You may schedule your meeting with me at your earliest convenience, but the Board requires our meeting to be no later than 20 days from the date of your receipt of this letter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Graci". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "G".

Robert A. Graci
Chief Counsel

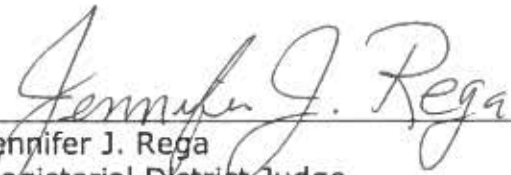
RAG\jpk
Attachments

Certified Mail No. 7161 7145 5373 0150 1870
Return Receipt Requested

CONSENT

I, Jennifer J. Rega, consent to the dismissal of Complaint Numbers 2014-619, 2014-742, and 2014-749 with the issuance of this Letter of Counsel. **I understand and agree that the contents of this Letter of Counsel and any supporting facts for this Letter of Counsel obtained through the Board's investigation may be used during any future proceedings involving new complaints against me before the Board. I understand and agree that the contents of this Letter of Counsel and any supporting facts for this Letter of Counsel may be used in public proceedings against me before either the Court of Judicial Discipline or the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.**

DATE: March 10, 2015

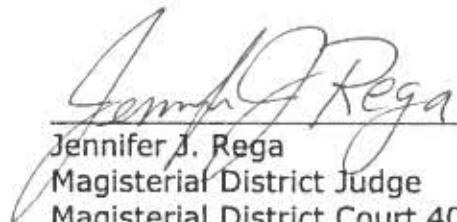


Jennifer J. Rega
Magisterial District Judge
Magisterial District Court 40-3-03
Indiana County

WAIVER OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I, Jennifer J. Rega, Magisterial District Judge, Magisterial District Court 40-3-03, hereby waive the confidentiality provisions of the following authorities: (1) Article V, § 18(a)(8) of the Pennsylvania Constitution; (2) Rule 17 of the Judicial Conduct Board Rules of Procedure; (3) any applicable Internal Operating Procedure of the Judicial Conduct Board; and (4) any case precedent regarding the confidentiality of judicial conduct complaints in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I understand that this waiver of confidentiality applies only to the Board's investigation and disposition of Judicial Conduct Board complaint numbers 2014-619, 2014-742, and 2014-749, and does not apply to any complaints that may be presented against me in the future. I understand that this waiver does not apply to the content of medical records or personal identifiers such as Social Security Numbers, home addresses, names of minor children, which may have been received by the Board in the course of its investigation. I understand that this waiver allows the Board, in its sole discretion, to publicly disclose the Letter of Counsel issued by the Board to Jennifer J. Rega, dated February 10, 2015.

DATE: March 10, 2015


Jennifer J. Rega
Magisterial District Judge
Magisterial District Court 40-3-03
Indiana County