



Judicial Conduct Board
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Melissa L. Norton, Chief Counsel
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Press Release

September 7, 2023

FROM: Melissa L. Norton
Chief Counsel

SUBJECT: Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight
Magisterial District Court 12-2-04
12th Judicial District
Dauphin County
2 JD 2023

HARRISBURG, PA - On Wednesday, September 6, 2023, the Judicial Conduct Board filed formal charges in the Court of Judicial Discipline against Dauphin County Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight. The Board Complaint alleges violations of the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Accompanying the Board Complaint, the Board filed a Petition for Special Relief seeking revocation of the probation imposed at Court of Judicial Discipline Docket Number 1 JD 2021 and Interim Suspension With or Without Pay pending the disposition of the Board Complaint.

Under the Pennsylvania Constitution, Judge McKnight, as the subject of the charges, is presumed innocent in all proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline. The Board has the burden of proving the charges filed in the Court of Judicial Discipline by clear and convincing evidence.

In accordance with the rules which govern proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline, Judge McKnight has the right to respond to the charges, to obtain and inspect the evidence which forms the basis of the allegations, and to a public trial before the Court of Judicial Discipline.

Upon completion of the trial, if the Court determines that any of the charges have been proven by clear and convincing evidence, it will schedule a hearing to determine what sanction, if any, should be imposed. Possible sanctions include censure, suspension, fine or removal from office.

The Board Complaint and Petition for Special Relief accompany this press release. The documents are also available on the Board's website at www.jcbpa.org (select the Resource Tab then select Press Releases in the drop-down menu).

Court filings for all cases prosecuted by the Board are available on the Court of Judicial Discipline website at <http://www.pacourts.us/courts/court-of-judicial-discipline>.

Counsel:

Representing the Judicial Conduct Board: Elizabeth R. Donnelly, Deputy Counsel

Representing Magisterial District Judge Sonya M. McKnight: To be determined

Contact: Melissa L. Norton, Chief Counsel