



Press Release

October 12, 2011

TO: Media/Press

FROM: Judicial Conduct Board

SUBJECT: 6 JD 2011 Magisterial District Judge Ross C. Cioppa, District Court 05-2-09, Allegheny County

Harrisburg. On Wednesday, October 12, 2011, the Judicial Conduct Board filed a Petition for Relief in the Court of Judicial Discipline seeking the Interim Suspension of Magisterial District Judge Ross C. Cioppa. The Constitution of Pennsylvania authorizes interim suspension of judges who are charged with felony criminal conduct. The Board filed the Petition following the filing of charges against Judge Cioppa by the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office. Judge Cioppa was charged by criminal complaint with 2 counts each of Bribery, a third-degree felony, Indecent Assault, a second-degree misdemeanor, and Official Oppression, a second-degree misdemeanor. The criminal complaint alleges that Judge Cioppa solicited sexual favors from female litigants who appeared in his courtroom as consideration for favorable decisions by him in their cases. The criminal charges against Judge Cioppa are pending currently in the Court of Common Pleas of Allegheny County.

The Board reserves comment on this matter until such time as the criminal charges against Judge Cioppa are resolved.

Contact

Hank Abate, Chairman, Judicial Conduct Board
James E. McErlane, Esquire, Vice-Chair, Judicial Conduct Board
Joseph A. Massa, Jr., Chief Counsel
717-234-7911

Board's Petition for Relief attached.

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

END

**IN THE
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE OF
PENNSYLVANIA**

No. 6 JD 2011

IN RE: ROSS C. CIOPPA, MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE,
DISTRICT COURT 05-2-09, FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT,
ALLEGHENY COUNTY

RECEIVED AND FILED
COURT OF
JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE
OF PENNSYLVANIA

2011 OCT 12 A 11: 27

PETITION FOR RELIEF UNDER RULE 701 AND BOARD
RULE 13(A) REQUESTING INTERIM SUSPENSION WITH
PAY OF RESPONDENT ROSS C. CIOPPA, MAGISTERIAL
DISTRICT JUDGE

JOSEPH A. MASSA, JR.
Chief Counsel

BY: JAMES P. KLEMAN, JR.
Assistant Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 87637
Judicial Conduct Board
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

DATE: October 12, 2011

AND NOW, this 12th day of October, 2011, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by and through Joseph A. Massa, Jr., Chief Counsel, and James P. Kleman, Jr., Assistant Counsel, and files this Petition for Relief under Rule 701 of the Rules of Procedure for the Court of Judicial Discipline and Rule 13(A) of the Judicial Conduct Board Rules of Procedure Requesting Interim Suspension With Pay, and avers the following:

1. Petitioner is the Judicial Conduct Board (hereinafter referred to as "Board") of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Board is constituted pursuant to Article V, Section 18(a) of the Pennsylvania Constitution.
2. Since June 25, 1999, Ross C. Cioppa (Respondent) has served as the duly elected Magisterial District Judge for District 05-2-09 in Allegheny County.
3. By presentment dated October 6, 2011, Respondent was indicted by a countywide investigating grand jury for the following offenses: (1) Bribery, 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4701(a)(2) (two counts), a felony of the third degree; (2) Official oppression, 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 5301(1) (two counts), a misdemeanor of the second degree; and indecent assault, 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 3126(a)(1) (two counts), a misdemeanor of the

second degree.

4. By criminal complaint, Jackelyn Weibel, a Detective employed by the Office of the District Attorney of Allegheny County charged Respondent with the above-cited offenses on October 12, 2011. **See Attachment "A."**

5. The Pennsylvania Constitution at Article V, § 18(d)(2) provides the following :

Prior to a hearing, the Court (Court of Judicial Discipline) may issue an interim order directing the suspension, with or without pay, of any justice, judge or justice of the peace against whom formal charges have been filed with the Court by the Board (Judicial Conduct Board) ***or against whom has been filed an indictment or information charging a felony.*** An interim order under this paragraph shall not be considered a final order from which an appeal may be taken.

(emphasis added).

6. The Respondent has allegedly engaged in felonious criminal conduct so egregious as to constitute an affront to the Constitution of this Commonwealth and to the Rules Governing the Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges which, *inter alia*, require judges to uphold the integrity of the judiciary and to observe high standards of conduct.

7. Public confidence in and the reputation of the judiciary has been undermined by the charges against Respondent and will continue to be undermined if the Respondent is permitted to remain on the bench after being charged with the aforementioned violations of the Pennsylvania Crimes Code.
8. Based upon the nature of the crimes charged; the relation of the charges to the duties of a judge; the discordance of the actions with the dignity with which we aspire to address our judges; the impact on the administration of justice; the harm to the reputation of the system of justice; the harm to public confidence in the judiciary, and the totality of the circumstances, the Board seeks the immediate suspension of Respondent with pay pending final disposition of the criminal prosecution by the Allegheny County District Attorney's office.
9. On October 12, 2011, a teleconference was conducted with Phillip DiLucente, Esquire, attorney for Respondent, President Judge John Morris, and Chief Counsel Joseph Massa, wherein Attorney DiLucente indicated that Respondent would not

contest this petition or request this Court to hold a hearing
on the matter.

WHEREFORE, the Board, by and through Joseph A. Massa, Jr., Chief
Counsel, respectfully requests that this Honorable Court enter an interim order
directing the suspension of Respondent with pay and such other relief as may
be deemed appropriate:

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: October 12, 2011

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Joseph A. Massa, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Joseph A. Massa, Jr.
Chief Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 6467
Judicial Conduct Board
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE OF PENNSYLVANIA

In re:

Ross C. Cioppa,
Magisterial District Judge,
District Court 05-2-09,
Fifth Judicial District,
Allegheny County


No. 6 JD 2011

VERIFICATION

I, Joseph A. Massa, Jr., Chief Counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board, verify that the statements made in the foregoing Petition for Relief are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: October 12, 2011



Joseph A. Massa, Jr.
Chief Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 6467
Judicial Conduct Board
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
VS

MDJ: Hon. ROSS C CIOPPA
Magisterial District Number: 05-2-09
Address: 300 RANKIN BLVD
RANKIN, PA 15104

DEFENDANT: (NAME and ADDRESS):
ROSS C. CIOPPA
First Name Middle Name Last Name Gen
986 ILLINOIS AVENUE PITTSBURGH, PA 15221

Phone: 412.271.7734

NOI Classification Code Type

Felony - Full Extradition

Distance: _____

DEFENDANT IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

Docket Number	Date Filed	OTN/InScan Number G 543032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011	SID	Request Lab Services? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes		
GENDER MALE	DOB 05/04/1941	POB	Addr DOB	Co-Defendant(s) <input type="checkbox"/>			
RACE WHITE	First Name		Middle Name	Last Name	Gen		
ETHNICITY	AKA						
HAIR COLOR	EYE COLOR BRO (BROWN)						
Driver License	State OR	License Number 10970415	Expires	WEIGHT (lbs)			
DNA	DNA Location						
FBI Number	MUN Number				HEIGHT (in)		
Defendant Fingerprinted					5 09		
Fingerprint Classification							
DEFENDANT VEHICLE INFORMATION							
Plate #	State	Harvest	Registration Sector (MMYY)	Comm'l Veh. Ind.	School Veh.	Other NOIC Veh. Code	Reg. Same as Def. <input type="checkbox"/>
VIN	Year	Make	Model	Style	Color		

Office of the attorney for the Commonwealth Approved Disapproved because: _____

(The attorney for the Commonwealth may require that the complaint, arrest warrant affidavit, or both be approved by the attorney for the Commonwealth prior to filing. See Pa.R.Olm.P. 507).

Name of the attorney for the Commonwealth

(Signature of the attorney for the Commonwealth)

(Date)

I, JACKELYN WEIBEL

39733

(Name of the Affiant)

(PSP/MP/OC/ETC - Assigned Affiant ID Number & Badge #)

of DISTRICT ATTORNEYS DETECTIVES

PA002013A

(Identify Department or Agency Represented and Political Subdivision)

(Police Agency ORI Number)

do hereby state: (check appropriate box)

- 1. X I accuse the above named defendant who lives at the address set forth above
- I accuse the defendant whose name is unknown to me but who is described as _____

I accuse the defendant whose name and popular designation or nickname are unknown to me and whom I have, therefore, designated as John Doe or Jane Doe

with violating the penal laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at 456 RANKIN BORO
(Subdivision Code) (Place/Political Subdivision)

In Allegheny County

02
(County Code)

on or about 11/04/2009 12:00



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTNLiveScan Number G 543032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011
Defendant Name	First: ROSS	Middle: C.	Last: CIOPPA

The acts committed by the accused are described below with each Act of Assembly or statute allegedly violated, if appropriate. When there is more than one offense, each offense should be numbered chronologically. (Set forth a brief summary of the facts sufficient to advise the defendant of the nature of the offense(s) charged. A citation to the statute(s) allegedly violated, without more, is not sufficient. In a summary case, you must cite the specific section(s) and subsection(s) of the statute(s) or ordinance(s) allegedly violated. The age of the victim at the time of the offense may be included if known. In addition, social security numbers and financial information (e.g. FINS) should not be listed. If the identity of an account must be established, list only the last four digits. 204 PA Code §§213.1 - 213.7.)

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903						
X	1	4701	A2	of the	18	2	F3		
Lead?	Offense#	Section	Subsection		PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NOG Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
PennDOT Data (if applicable)		Accident Number				<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
<p>Statute Description/Acts of the accused associated with this Offense:</p> <p>18 4701A2 BRIBERY IN OFFICIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS F3 2 COUNTS</p> <p>The actor offered, conferred or agreed to confer upon, or solicited, accepted or agreed to accept from VICTIM 1 a benefit, as consideration for the decision, vote, recommendation or other exercise of discretion, by the recipient in a judicial, administrative or legislative proceeding, specifically LANDLORD/TENANT HEARING AT MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT 05-2-09, in violation of 18 Pa.C.S.§4701(a)(2).</p> <p>The actor offered, conferred or agreed to confer upon, or solicited, accepted or agreed to accept from VICTIM 2 a benefit, as consideration for the decision, vote, recommendation or other exercise of discretion, by the recipient in a judicial, administrative or legislative proceeding, specifically LANDLORD/TENANT HEARING AT MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT 05-2-09, in violation of 18 Pa.C.S.§4701(a)(2).</p>									



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTNLiveScan Number G 543032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011
Defendant Name	First ROSS	Middle C.	Last CIOPPA

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903						
Lead?	Offense#	Section	Subsection	of the	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NGC Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
	2	3126	A1		18	2	M2		
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number					<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
Statute Description/Acts of the accused associated with this Offense:									
<p>18 3126A1 INDECENT ASSAULT M2 2 COUNTS</p> <p>The actor had indecent contact with, or caused VICTIM 1 to have indecent contact with the actor or intentionally caused VICTIM 1 to come into contact with seminal fluid, urine or feces for the purpose of arousing sexual desire in the person or the complainant and without the consent of that person, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. §3126 (a) (1).</p> <p>The actor had indecent contact with, or caused VICTIM 2 to have indecent contact with the actor or intentionally caused VICTIM 2 to come into contact with seminal fluid, urine or feces for the purpose of arousing sexual desire in the person or the complainant and without the consent of that person, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. §3126 (a) (1).</p>									

Inchoate Offense	<input type="checkbox"/> Attempt 18 901 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Solicitation 18 902 A	<input type="checkbox"/> Conspiracy 18 903						
Lead?	Offense#	Section	Subsection	of the	PA Statute (Title)	Counts	Grade	NGC Offense Code	UCR/NIBRS Code
	3	5301	1		18	2	M2		
PennDOT Data (if applicable)	Accident Number					<input type="checkbox"/> Safety Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Work Zone		
Statute Description/Acts of the accused associated with this Offense:									
<p>18 53011 OFFICIAL OPPRESSION M2 2 COUNTS</p> <p>The actor, acting or purporting to act in an official capacity or taking advantage of such actual or purported capacity namely MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE 05-2-09, knowing that said actor's conduct was illegal subjected another to arrest, detention, search, seizure, mistreatment, dispossession, assessment, lien or other infringement of personal or property rights; or denied or impeded the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity by another, namely VICTIM 1, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. §5301(1) or (2).</p> <p>The actor, acting or purporting to act in an official capacity or taking advantage of such actual or purported capacity namely MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE 05-2-09, knowing that said actor's conduct was illegal subjected another to arrest, detention, search, seizure, mistreatment, dispossession, assessment, lien or other infringement of personal or property rights; or denied or impeded the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity by another, namely VICTIM 2, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. §5301(1) or (2).</p>									



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTN LiveScan Number G 543032-0		Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011
Defendant Name	First: ROSS	Middle: C.	Last: GIOPPA	



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTN/VideoScan Number G 543032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011
Defendant Name	First ROSS	Middle C.	Last CIOPPA

- I ask that a warrant of arrest or a summons be issued and that the defendant be required to answer the charges I have made.
- I verify that the facts set forth in this complaint are true and correct to the best of my knowledge or information and belief. This verification is made subject to the penalties of Section 4904 of the Crimes Code (18 PA.C.S. §4904) relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.
- This complaint is comprised of the preceding page(s) numbered _____ through _____

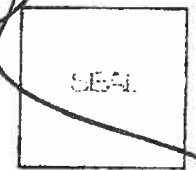
The acts committed by the accused, as listed and hereafter, were against the peace and dignity of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and were contrary to the Act(s) of the Assembly, or in violation of the statutes cited.
 (Before a warrant of arrest can be issued, an affidavit of probable cause must be completed, sworn to before the issuing authority, and attached.)

Jacquelyn W. Walsh
 (Signature of Affiant)

AND NOW, on this date 05 13 11 (Date) I certify that the complaint has been properly completed and verified.

An affidavit of probable cause must be completed before a warrant can be issued.

Common Pleas J. M. ...
 (Magisterial District Court Number) (Issuing Authority)





POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTNLiveScan Number G 543032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-48-2011
Defendant Name	First: ROSS	Middle: C.	Last: CIOPPA

AFFIDAVIT of PROBABLE CAUSE

1. WHEN:

- a) Date when Affiant received information:

- b) Date when the source of information (Police Officers, Informant, Victim, Co-Defendant, Defendant, etc.) received information:

2. HOW:

- a) How Affiant knows this particular person committed crime: (personal observation, defendant's admissions, etc.):

- b) How the source of information knows this particular person committed the crime:

- c) How both Affiant and/or source of information knows that a particular crime has been committed:

3. WHAT CRIMES:

- 18 3126 A1 INDECENT ASSAULT
- 18 4701 A2 BRIBERY IN OFFICIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS
- 18 5301 1 OFFICIAL OPPRESSION
- 18 4701 A2 BRIBERY IN OFFICIAL AND POLITICAL MATTERS
- 18 5301 1 OFFICIAL OPPRESSION
- 18 3126 A1 INDECENT ASSAULT

4. WHERE CRIME(S) COMMITTED:

RANKIN, PA

6. WHY AFFIANT BELIEVES THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

- Source is presumed reliable, i.e. other Police Officer, Eyewitness, Victim of Crime, etc.
- Source has given information in the past which has led to arrest and/or conviction
- Defendant's reputation for criminal activity
- This source made declaration against his/her penal interest to the above offense
- Affiant and/or other Police Officers corroborated details of the information



POLICE CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

Docket Number:	Date Filed:	OTN/VideoScan Number G 843032-0	Complaint/Incident Number B-46-2011
Defendant Name	First: ROSS	Middle: C.	Last: CIOPPA

Your Affiant, Jackelyn Weibel, is a Detective with the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office and has been so for approximately the past two years. Your Affiant is also a Certified Fraud Examiner and has assisted in the detection and prosecution of numerous financial crime cases and political corruption cases for the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office for two years prior to becoming a Detective. As such, your Affiant has extensive experience in the investigation and prosecution of white collar crime. Working with and providing your Affiant with information and evidence are other law enforcement officers including: Detective Todd Moses and Detective William Miller, both from the Allegheny County District Attorney's Investigations Unit.

The investigation that was initiated by the Allegheny County District Attorney's Office began in February of 2011 after complaints were received from various police officers, court officials and members of the community regarding alleged criminal conduct on the part of the Allegheny County Magisterial 05-2-09 District Judge Ross Cioppa. This Magisterial District encompasses the boroughs of Rankin, Swissvale and Braddock Hills. Certain complaints in this case involve Cioppa's alleged sexual advances directed at female litigants who had cases adjudicated in his courtroom in exchange for consideration on their cases.

After the investigation began in the District Attorney's Investigation Unit, your Affiant took part in a six (6) week long investigation by the 2010 Allegheny County Investigating Grand Jury into the Magisterial District 05-2-09 Judge Ross Cioppa's alleged criminal conduct. After these six (6) weeks of investigation and having been the recipient of information received from law enforcement officers, court officials, having heard from witnesses and reviewing pertinent documents, this Grand Jury issued Presentment "F". Your Affiant reviewed the Grand Jury Presentment and asserts that the Grand Jury's investigative findings comport with the findings of your Affiant and other law enforcement officers who have provided information to your Affiant. There exists a presumption of regularity which surrounds Grand Jury proceedings and as such your Affiant avers that this source of information, the Grand Jury Presentment, is presumed reliable. Your Affiant has attached a copy of the said Presentment which is made a part of this Affidavit of Probable Cause by this reference hereto and offers the information contained therein as probable cause for the issuance of process, namely, an arrest warrant for the herein named actor on the charges of Official Oppression (18 Pa. C.S.A. Section 5301(1)), Indecent Assault (18 C.S.A. Section 3126 (a)(1)) and Bribery in Official and Political Matters (18 Pa. C.S.A. Section 4701 (a)(2)).

I, JACKELYN WEIBEL, BEING DULY SWORN ACCORDING TO THE LAW, DEPOSE AND SAY THAT THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE FOREGOING AFFIDAVIT ARE TRUE AND CORRECT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND BELIEF.

Jackelyn Weibel

 (Signature of Affiant)

Sworn to me and subscribed before me this 12 day of Oct 2011

 Date *[Signature]* Magisterial District Judge

My commission expires first Monday of January, 2016



IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE OF PENNSYLVANIA

In re:

Ross C. Cioppa, : No. 6 JD 2011
Magisterial District Judge, :
District Court 05-2-09, :
Fifth Judicial District, :
Allegheny County :

PROOF OF SERVICE

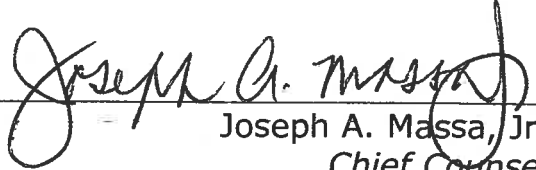
On October 12, 2011, a copy of this Petition for Relief was sent by
Certified Mail to:

Honorable Ross C. Cioppa c/o
Phillip P. DiLucente, Esquire
Evashavik, DiLucente & Tetlow, LLC
310 Grant Street, Suite 1801 Grant Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Certified Mail No.
Return Receipt Requested

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: October 12, 2011


Joseph A. Massa, Jr.
Chief Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 6467
Judicial Conduct Board
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
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