



# JUDICIAL STANDARDS COMMISSION

## STATE OF MONTANA

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January 14, 2025

Matt Regier, President of the Senate  
Brandon Ler, Speaker of the House  
State of Montana  
Sixty-Ninth Legislature  
State Capitol  
Helena, Montana

Dear President Regier and Speaker Ler:

As required by Montana Code Annotated § 3-1-1126, the Montana Judicial Standards Commission (Commission) submits this report to the legislature for the preceding biennium covering calendar years 2023 and 2024.

Article VII, Section 11, of the 1972 Montana Constitution directs the legislature to create a five-member Judicial Standards Commission to accept and consider grievances against Montana judicial officers. The 1973 legislature created the Commission, and it is attached to the Montana Supreme Court for administrative purposes. Mont. Code Ann. § 3-1-1101 through – 1126. The work, investigations, and recommendations of the Commission are independent of the Supreme Court. With few exceptions, all papers and proceedings before the Commission are confidential pursuant to Montana Code Annotated § 3-1-1105. Access to Commission records is limited to the Commission and staff.

The Commission's report to the sixty-eighth legislature (2023 session) showed that fourteen (14) grievances were still pending at the close of 2022. Of those pending grievances, thirteen (13) grievances were dismissed, and one (1) resulted in a public reprimand and suspension under Rule 10(G), of the JSC procedural rules, with a 30-day suspension, without pay.

As shown in the attached spreadsheet, sixty-eight (68) grievances were filed against judicial officers in calendar year 2023. After consideration and investigation, fifty-nine (59) of those grievances were dismissed. Ten (10) of those grievances required a response from the judge prior to a decision by the Commission. There were nine (9) grievances pending as of December 31, 2023. Seven (7) of the pending grievances were dismissed in January 2024. Two (2) of those grievances required a response from the judge prior to a decision by the Commission and they were both dismissed in March 2024.

For calendar year 2024, eighty-four (84) grievances were filed against judicial officers. After consideration and investigation, seventy-four (74) grievances were dismissed, and one (1) resulted in a letter of admonition. Twenty-two (22) of those grievances required a response from

the judge prior to a decision by the Commission. There were 9 grievances pending as of December 31, 2024.

For reference purposes, I have attached a copy of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct, revised by order of the Montana Supreme Court on March 25, 2014, and a copy of the Judicial Standards Commission Rules, revised by order of the Montana Supreme Court on November 19, 2024. In an effort of full disclosure, I have also attached a copy of all complaints filed against me during the biennium and the responses I submitted at the request of the Commission.

Should any member of the legislature, or staff, have questions or need additional information, they may contact Shelly Smith, the Commission's executive secretary, or any member of the Commission.

Very truly yours,



Hon. Mike Menahan, Chairman  
JUDICIAL STANDARDS COMMISSION

MM/ss  
Attachment

cc: Tom McGillvray, Senate Majority Leader  
Pat Flowers, Senate Minority Leader  
Marissa Stockton, Secretary of the Senate  
Steve Fitzpatrick, House Majority Leader  
Katie Sullivan, House Minority Leader  
Carolyn Tschida, Chief Clerk of the House  
Hon. Cory Swanson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court  
Rachel Weiss, Lead Staff, Law and Justice Interim Committee