



Committee on Judicial Ethics

Annual Report for January 1 - December 31, 2022

Membership and Terms. The Committee on Judicial Ethics, which began operating on August 1, 2008, continued its work throughout the 2022 calendar year. The membership from January 1, 2022 to November 13, 2022 consisted of the following members: Hon. James T. Graham (Chair); Hon. Robert B. Shapiro; Hon. Michael P. Kamp; Hon. Vernon D. Oliver; Professor Carolyn W. Kaas and Hon. Karen A. Goodrow (Alternate). In response to Judge Graham’s resignation, the Chief Justice made the following appointments, effective November 14, 2022: Judge Vernon D. Oliver (Chair), Judge Karen Goodrow (Member) and Judge Wendy Grispin (Alternate). Attorneys Joseph J. Del Ciampo, Viviana L. Livesay, Adam P. Mauriello, and Martin Libbin continued to serve as staff to the Committee. On March 10, 2022, Attorney Cynthia Theran was designated as an additional Assistant Secretary. The current terms of the five (5) Committee members and one (1) alternate are as follows:

Hon. Vernon D. Oliver (Chair)	August 1, 2020 to July 31, 2023
Hon. Michael P. Kamp	August 1, 2020 to July 31, 2023
Hon. Robert B. Shapiro	November 14, 2022 to July 31, 2025
Prof. Carolyn W. Kaas	November 14, 2022 to July 31, 2025
Hon. Karen A. Goodrow	November 14, 2022 to July 31, 2025
Hon. Wendy A. Grispin (Alternate)	November 14, 2022 to July 31, 2025

Policy and Rules. No policy or rule changes took place during 2022.

Committee Webpage. No substantial changes were made to the webpage during 2022. Notice of all meetings, agendas and minutes continued to be made available on the Committee’s website, as well as on the “State Agency Public Meeting Calendar” website portal found at: <https://egov.ct.gov/pmc>.

New Judge Training. On May 3, 2022, Judge Michael Kamp and Attorneys Joseph Del Ciampo, Adam Mauriello and Viviana Livesay conducted ethics training for new judges during the pre-bench orientation.

Activity. During 2022, the Committee met via *Microsoft Teams* nine (9) times to discuss pending inquiries. Members of the public who were interested in attending meetings were permitted to observe meetings via *Microsoft Teams*. The Committee received one (1) request for a formal opinion, seven (7) requests for informal advisory opinions and no requests for emergency staff opinions. One request (2022-02) was withdrawn. Five (5) advisory opinions involved off-the-bench activities and three (3) concerned on-the-bench conduct. The following is a brief description of the issues presented:

- May a Judicial Official accept an emergency transfer of custody as a family placement by DCF of the Judicial Official’s grandchild? ([2022-01](#))
- May a Judicial Official speak individually to members of a political party’s town committee or to other individuals in the community about a possible nonjudicial municipal candidacy? ([2022-03](#))
- May a Judicial Official write an occasional column for an online newspaper to educate the public on the ways the legal system works, how judges make decisions, and the law generally? ([2022-04](#))
- May a Judicial Official write a foreword or dedication in the next State Register and Manual (also known as the “Blue Book”) honoring current Secretary of the State Denise Merrill? ([2022-05](#))
- Should an appellate-level Judicial Official, who has a personal residential tax appeal pending before the Tax and Administrative Appeals Session of the Superior Court (Tax Session), recuse from deciding any or all matters appealed from the Tax Session to the appellate tribunal on which the Judicial Official sits? ([2022-06](#))
- Must a Judicial Official automatically recuse from a pending case upon learning that an attorney in the case consulted with a former judge? ([2022-07 Formal Opinion](#))
- What ethical concerns apply if Connecticut Judges Association membership is expanded to include retired judges/practicing attorneys? Is it ethically permissible to belong to an association where some members engage in the practice of law? Is it ethically permissible to belong to an association that is open to a limited number of attorneys (only those who were former judges)? ([2022-08](#))
- What is the nature of a Judicial Official’s obligation when a Judicial Official receives information that an attorney may have committed a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct? ([2022-09](#))

The Committee observed that the subjects of inquiries during 2022, as in the previous years, revealed that Judicial Officials continue to pay close attention to the growing body of formal and informal opinions. The requests during 2022 continue to consist of increasingly nuanced and current subjects, reflecting heightened sensitivity toward maintaining ethical

conduct. Groups of new judges should continue to receive training to make them aware of the Committee's work and to encourage them to submit inquiries pertaining to the transitional stage as well as throughout their careers.

The Committee, which has now completed fourteen and a half years of service, is encouraged that Judicial Officials appear to be actively using our services and benefitting from access to the summaries of Informal and Formal opinions and the cross-referenced Subject Matter Index, as well as the minutes of Committee meetings. While encouraging Judicial Officials to consult the webpage regularly, the Committee continues to urge that Judicial Officials should not hesitate to present inquiries whenever they have concerns, regardless of the subject matter or the complexity of the issue or whether the particular subject may have been addressed in some respects previously. Ethics inquiries are highly fact-specific and even issues that have been addressed before may present new concerns.

The Committee is prepared to use the "Ethics Alert" feature of the webpage whenever necessary to increase the likelihood that advisory opinions on crucial matters of broad interest will come to the attention of Judicial Officials. All Committee members continue to receive monthly updates from Cynthia Gray, the ethics director of the National Center for State Courts, Center for Judicial Ethics.

The members of the Committee join in thanking and commending its Secretary and Assistant Secretaries for their excellent and prompt professional assistance in the work of the Committee.

Recommendations. The Committee again recommends that ethics components be included on a regular basis in the CJI program. The Committee also welcomes suggestions as to how it can further improve its website to insure effective access to the growing body of ethical opinions.

Conclusion. The Committee is dedicated to providing accurate, timely, and effective ethics opinions for the guidance of Judicial Officials while also maximizing the privacy of Judicial Officials who submit requests.

Respectfully submitted,



Vernon D. Oliver, Chair
January 11, 2023