



# COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## *Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission*

Judge Stephanie E. Merritt, Chairman  
Judge James E. Plowman, Vice-Chairman  
Robert H. Simpson  
Judge Shannon O. Hoehl  
Humes J. Franklin, III, Esquire  
Terrie Thompson  
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November 30, 2020

## ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with Section 17.1-905 of the Code of Virginia, the Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission makes the following report concerning its activities during the past twelve months:

1. The Commission maintains statistical information on all incoming complaints, telephone calls and correspondence. Complaints and inquiries are separated into categories indicating the source, the nature of the complaint or inquiry, and the disposition of each complaint and inquiry, including whether a violation of the Canons of Judicial Conduct was found. The statistics required by § 17.1-905 are set forth in the attachment to this report, and are incorporated herein by this reference.

2. Commission Counsel provides confidential, informal ethics advice to Virginia judges on a daily basis.

3. The Commission presents educational programs concerning judicial ethics. During the past twelve months, Commission Counsel and Assistant Counsel participated in ethics training sessions at the Judicial Conference of Virginia, the District Court Judges' Annual Conference, Substitute Judge Regional seminars, the Special Justice seminar and the annual training for new Judges.

4. Information concerning the Commission is available on the internet at the home page of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Commission's Rules, the Canons of Judicial Conduct, and complaint forms are accessible on the website.

Respectfully submitted,



Robert Q. Harris  
Commission Counsel

ATTACHMENT to ANNUAL REPORT of  
THE JUDICIAL INQUIRY AND REVIEW COMMISSION of VIRGINIA  
November 25, 2020

- I. Persons subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission: 970
  - A. Judges, substitute Judges, Special Justices: 764
  - B. State Corporation Commissioners: 3
  - C. Virginia Workers' Compensation Commissioners: 3
  - D. Retired Judges (subject to recall): 200
  
- II. Calls received from Judges for confidential ethics advice: 448
  
- III. Statistics required by Virginia Code § 17.1-905:
  - A. Number of complaints received: 392
    - 1. originating from attorneys: 18
    - 2. originating from judges: 2
    - 3. originating from court employees: 1
    - 4. originating from general public: 373
  
  - B. Number of complaints dismissed<sup>1</sup>: 371
    - 1. failure to fall within the jurisdiction of the Commission: 331
    - 2. failure to state a violation of the Canons of Judicial Conduct: 161
    - 3. failure to conclude the Canons were breached: 13
  
  - C. Number of complaints for which the Commission concluded the Canons of Judicial Conduct were breached:
    - 1. breached and dismissed: 5
    - 2. breached and not dismissed: 4
  
  - D. Number of cases from which staff or any Commission member recused: 9

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<sup>1</sup> | Complaints may be dismissed for more than one reason.