

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

RECEIVED AND FILED

IN RE:

Judge Scott DiClaudio  
Court of Common Pleas  
First Judicial District  
Philadelphia County

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:  
:

2 JD 2025

SEP - 9 2025

COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE  
OF PENNSYLVANIA

**PETITION FOR RELIEF FOR INTERIM SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY**

AND NOW, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of September 2025, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Board), by and through undersigned counsel, and files this Petition for Relief for Interim Suspension Without Pay pursuant to Article V, §18(d)(2) of the Pennsylvania Constitution, Rule 701 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, and Rule 13(A) of the Judicial Conduct Board Rules of Procedure and in support thereof avers the following:

1. The Pennsylvania Constitution at Article V, §18(d)(2) provides this Court with the authority to impose interim suspension as follows:

Prior to a hearing, the court may issue an interim order directing 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 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.

2. From January 4, 2016, to the present, Judge DiClaudio has served as a Common Pleas Judge in Philadelphia County, excepting a two-week suspension imposed by this Court that took place from August 15, 2021, through August 29, 2021.

3. Contemporaneously with this filing, Board Counsel is filing a Board Complaint against Judge DiClaudio alleging six counts of judicial misconduct. A copy of the Board Complaint is attached hereto, made a part hereof, and incorporated herein by reference as though set forth in full. **See Attachment "A."**
4. Further, on June 25, 2025, as a result of Judge DiClaudio's conduct, Administrative Judge Anders limited Judge DiClaudio's present judicial assignment only to drafting and filing Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a) opinions for matters on appeal to the Pennsylvania Superior Court.
5. The allegations contained within the Board Complaint against Judge DiClaudio undermine both public confidence in the judiciary and the reputation of the judiciary. If Judge DiClaudio is permitted to continue to perform *any* judicial duties and receive a judicial salary during the pendency of this Board Complaint, the public's confidence in the judiciary will continue to erode.

WHEREFORE, it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court enter an interim order suspending Judge DiClaudio, without pay, pending disposition of the Board Complaint against him, and to grant such other relief as may be deemed appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

MELISSA L. NORTON  
Chief Counsel

DATE: September 9, 2025

By:



Elizabeth A. Hoffheins  
Deputy Counsel

Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 209623  
Judicial Conduct Board  
Pennsylvania Judicial Center  
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500  
Harrisburg, PA 17106  
(717) 234-7911

**VERIFICATION**

I, Elizabeth A. Hoffheins, Deputy Counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board, verify that the Judicial Conduct Board found probable cause to file the formal charges contained in the *PETITION FOR SPECIAL RELIEF*. I understand that the statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa. Cons. Stat. Ann. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

MELISSA L. NORTON  
*Chief Counsel*

Date: September 9, 2025

By:



Elizabeth A. Hoffheins  
Deputy Counsel  
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 209623  
Judicial Conduct Board  
Pennsylvania Judicial Center  
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500  
Harrisburg, PA 17106  
(717) 234-7911


**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Scott DiClaudio	:	
Court of Common Pleas	:	
First Judicial District	:	2 JD 2025
Philadelphia County	:	

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by:	Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania
Signature:	
Name:	ELIZABETH A. HOFFHEINS Deputy Counsel
Attorney No.:	209623

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Scott DiClaudio	:	
Court of Common Pleas	:	
First Judicial District	:	2 JD 2025
Philadelphia County	:	

**PROOF OF SERVICE**


In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, on the below date a copy of the Petition for Relief For Interim Suspension Without Pay was served by UPS Overnight Mail upon Michael T. van der Veen, Esquire counsel for Judge DiClaudio at the following address:

Michael T. van der Veen, Esquire  
Van Der Veen, Hartshorn, Levine & Lindheim  
1219 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: September 9, 2025

By:

  
Elizabeth A. Hoffheins  
Deputy Counsel  
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 209623  
Judicial Conduct Board  
Pennsylvania Judicial Center  
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500  
P.O. Box 62525  
Harrisburg, PA 17106  
(717) 234-7911

**EXHIBIT A**

**EXHIBIT A**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Scott DiClaudio	:	
Court of Common Pleas	:	
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Philadelphia County	:	

**TO: SCOTT DICLAUDIO**

**You are hereby notified that the Pennsylvania Judicial Conduct Board has determined that there is probable cause to file formal charges against you for conduct proscribed by Article V, § 17(b) and § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Code of Judicial Conduct. The Board's counsel will present the case in support of the charges before the Pennsylvania Court of Judicial Discipline.**

**You have an absolute right to be represented by a lawyer in all proceedings before the Court of Judicial Discipline. Your attorney should file an entry of appearance with the Court of Judicial Discipline within fifteen (15) days of service of this Board Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 110.**

**You are hereby notified, pursuant to C.J.D.R.P. No. 302(B), that should you elect to file an omnibus motion, that motion should be filed no later than thirty (30) days after the service of this Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 411.**

**You are further hereby notified that within thirty (30) days after the service of this Complaint, if no omnibus motion is filed, or within twenty (20) days after the dismissal of all or part of the omnibus motion, you may file an**



**Answer admitting or denying the allegations contained in this Complaint in accordance with C.J.D.R.P. No. 413. Failure to file an Answer shall be deemed a denial of all factual allegations in the Complaint.**

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
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IN RE:

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**COMPLAINT**

AND NOW, this 9th day of September 2025, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Board) and files this Board Complaint against the Honorable Scott DiClaudio, Court of Common Pleas, First Judicial District, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, alleging that Judge DiClaudio has violated the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Code of Judicial Conduct, as more specifically delineated herein.

**FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

1. Article V, § 18 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania grants to the Board the authority to determine whether there is probable cause to file formal charges against a judicial officer in this Court, and thereafter, to prosecute the case in support of such charges in this Court.
2. From January 4, 2016, to the present, Judge DiClaudio has served as a Common Pleas Judge in Philadelphia County, excepting a two-week suspension imposed by this Court that took place from August 15, 2021, through August 29, 2021.
3. Pursuant to Article V, § 18(a)(7) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Board has determined that there is probable cause to file formal charges against Judge DiClaudio in this Court.

4. On Thursday, June 12, 2025, Judge Zachary Shaffer of the First Judicial District and Nicole Vernacchio, Judge Shaffer's law clerk, met with Judge DiClaudio in his judicial chambers to complete the purchase of several t-shirts promoting Shay's Steaks, which is owned by Judge DiClaudio's wife.
5. After completing their business, Judge DiClaudio asked that Ms. Vernacchio leave the room such that the two men could converse privately.
6. While alone with Judge Shaffer, Judge DiClaudio showed him a piece of paper on which was written Judge Shaffer's courtroom number and the name of Dwayne Jones, a defendant who had pled guilty before Judge Shaffer and was scheduled to be sentenced by Judge Shaffer on the following Monday, June 16, 2025.
7. While presenting this paper to Judge Shaffer, Judge DiClaudio said to him "I've heard you might do the right thing anyway."
8. Judge DiClaudio then ripped the paper up and threw it in a trash can.
9. The following day, June 13, 2025, Judge Shaffer reported this conversation to Administrative Judge Daniel Anders and Supervising Judge Rose Defino-Nastasi.
10. Following this incident, Judge Shaffer recused from Mr. Jones's sentencing, which was transferred to another jurist.
11. Further, as a result of his conduct during this incident, on June 25, 2025, Administrative Judge Anders limited Judge DiClaudio's present judicial assignment only to drafting and filing Pa.R.A.P. 1925(a) opinions for matters on appeal to the Pennsylvania Superior Court.
12. Mr. Jones is a social acquaintance of the rapper Meek Mill, with whom Judge DiClaudio is also acquainted, both socially and professionally.

## **CHARGES**

### **Count 1 – Violation of Canon 1, Rule 1.1**

13. By virtue of some or all of the conduct alleged in paragraphs 4-12, Judge DiClaudio violated Canon 1, Rule 1.1 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

14. Canon 1, Rule 1.1 states the following:

Canon 1, Rule 1.1 – Compliance with the Law

A judge shall comply with the law, including the Code of Judicial Conduct.

15. By virtue of his conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio has failed to adhere to the strictures of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

### **Count 2– Violation of Canon 1, Rule 1.2**

16. By virtue of some or all of the conduct alleged in paragraphs 4 – 12, Judge DiClaudio violated Canon 1, Rule 1.2 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

17. Canon 1, Rule 1.2 states the following:

Canon 1, Rule 1.2 – Promoting Confidence in the Judiciary

A judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety.

18. By virtue of his conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio has failed to promote public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary and has failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance thereof.

### **Count 3 – Violation of Canon 2, Rule 2.4**

19. By virtue of some or all of the conduct alleged in paragraphs 4 – 12, Judge DiClaudio violated Canon 2, Rule 2.4 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

20. Canon 2, Rule 2.4 states the following:

Canon 2, Rule 2.4 – External Influences on Judicial Conduct

- (A) A judge shall not be swayed by public clamor or fear of criticism.
- (B) A judge shall not permit family, social, political, financial, or other interests or relationships to influence the judge's judicial conduct or judgment.
- (C) A judge shall not convey or permit others to convey the impression that any person or organization is in a position to influence the judge.

21. By virtue of his conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio has allowed his personal relationships to influence his judicial conduct.

**Count 4 – Violation of Canon 2, Rule 2.10**

22. By virtue of some or all of the conduct alleged in paragraphs 4 – 12, Judge DiClaudio violated Canon 2, Rule 2.10 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

23. Canon 2, Rule 2.10 states the following, in pertinent part:

Canon 2, Rule 2.10 – Judicial Statements on Pending and Impending Cases

- (A) A judge shall not make any public statement that might reasonably be expected to affect the outcome or impair the fairness of a matter pending or impending in any court, or make any nonpublic statement that might substantially interfere with a fair trial or hearing.
- (B) A judge shall not, in connection with cases, controversies, or issues that are likely to come before the court, make pledges, promises, or commitments that are inconsistent with the impartial performance of the adjudicative duties of judicial office.

24. By virtue of his conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio has made statements tending to affect the outcome or impair the fairness of a pending matter.

**Count 5 – Violation of Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

25. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio violated Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
26. Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania states the following:

Article V, § 17(b) [Derivative Violation]

Justices and judges shall not engage in any activity prohibited by law and shall not violate any canon of legal or judicial ethics prescribed by the Supreme Court.

27. A violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct constitutes an automatic, derivative violation of Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
28. Judge DiClaudio violated Canon 1, Rule 1.1 and Rule 1.2, and Canon 2, Rule 2.4 and Rule 2.10 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.
29. By virtue of some, one, or all of the violations set forth above, Judge DiClaudio violated Article V, § 17(b) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Count 6 - Violation of Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

30. By virtue of some or all of the conduct set forth above, Judge DiClaudio violated Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
31. Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania states the following:

Article V, § 18(d)(1) [Disrepute]

A justice, judge or justice of the peace may be suspended, removed from office or otherwise disciplined for . . .

conduct which . . . brings the judicial office into disrepute,  
whether or not the conduct occurred while acting in a  
judicial capacity[.]

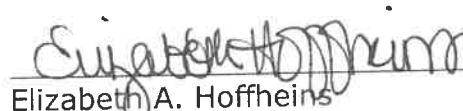
32. By his conduct as described in paragraphs 4 – 12 above, Judge DiClaudio, while on court probation for an earlier ethical violation, engaged in conduct that was so extreme that it brought the judicial office itself into disrepute and thereby constitutes a violation of the Disrepute Clause of Article V, § 18(d)(1) of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
33. WHEREFORE, Judge DiClaudio, judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia County, is subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Article V, § 18(d)(1).

Respectfully submitted,

MELISSA L. NORTON  
Chief Counsel

DATE: September 9, 2025

By:



Elizabeth A. Hoffheins  
Deputy Counsel  
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 209623  
Judicial Conduct Board  
Pennsylvania Judicial Center  
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500  
Harrisburg, PA 17106  
(717) 234-7911

**VERIFICATION**


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*Chief Counsel*

Date: September 9, 2025

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**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania

Signature:



Name:

ELIZABETH A. HOFFHEINS  
Deputy Counsel

Attorney No.:

209623

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**PROOF OF SERVICE**


In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, on the below date a copy of the Board's Complaint was served by UPS Overnight Mail upon Michael T. van der Veen, Esquire counsel for Judge DiClaudio at the following address:

Michael T. van der Veen, Esquire  
Van Der Veen, Hartshorn, Levine & Lindheim  
1219 Spruce Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: September 9, 2025

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Deputy Counsel  
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