

**IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF FLORIDA**

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,
THE HONORABLE JENNIFER DUBBELD
JQC NO. 2025-365

SC25-

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF DISCIPLINE

Procedural History

In June 2025, the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission (the “JQC”) served a Notice of Investigation on Sixth Circuit Judge Jennifer Dubbeld, pursuant to Rule 6(b) of the Florida Judicial Qualification Commission Rules (“FJQC Rules”). On September 5, 2025, Judge Dubbeld appeared before the Investigative Panel of the Commission accompanied by counsel, and provided testimony under oath, in response to the Notice of Investigation. During that hearing, Judge Dubbeld admitted that her conduct while a Judicial Candidate regarding the violations described in the Notice of Formal Charges, occurring during her 2024 judicial campaign, failed to adhere to the high standards required by the Code of Judicial Conduct. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Investigative Panel voted to find probable cause and proceed with the institution of formal charges, pursuant to FJQC Rule 6(f).

The Charges

The Investigative Panel found probable cause involving improper judicial campaign activity, in violation of Canon 7(A)(1)(b), 7(A)(3)(b), 7(A)(3)(e)(ii), and 7(C)(1) of the Code of Judicial Conduct as set forth below. At all times material hereto, Judge Dubbel was a candidate for judicial office in the 2024 election cycle.

1. During her campaign, Judge Dubbeld made a Facebook post disparaging her opponent, stating “Actual courtroom experience matters, just as being straightforward and not misrepresenting qualifications (as some have done).”
2. Judge Dubbeld produced a handout requesting contributions to her campaign, which she personally handed out at campaign events and forums. The handout contained a QR code which linked to an Anedot account set up by Judge Dubbeld’s campaign to accept financial contributions. The text said “scan here” and “contribute to the Committee to elect Jenn Dubbeld.” Judge Dubbeld acknowledged that the text and QR code on the flyer, which she personally handed out, made it appear that she was making a solicitation for financial support.
3. Judge Dubbeld’s campaign used photographs and endorsements of herself with other candidates who ran during the 2024 cycle, including

some who had active opposition in U.S. Rep. Laurel Lee and U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis.

4. Judge Dubbeld's campaign posted photographs on its campaign webpage and Facebook page of public officials and attorneys who had not endorsed her candidacy, implying their support. These photographs were posted without the disclaimer recommended by Fla. JEAC Op. 08-11. The result may have confused or misled voters as to whether those people pictured had in some way supported or endorsed Judge Dubbeld's campaign.

By her written response to the Notice of Investigation, her sworn oral testimony before the Investigative Panel, and by the execution of a Stipulation filed concurrently with these Findings and Recommendations, Judge Dubbeld has agreed to and admitted the facts and circumstances described in the Notice of Formal Charges, and in these Findings, and she has agreed that her actions constitute violations of Canon 7(A)(1)(b), 7(A)(3)(b), 7(A)(3)(e)(ii), and 7(C)(1) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Finally, she has agreed that these charges are supported by clear and convincing evidence, and that she should receive the recommended discipline.

Therefore, in light of Judge Dubbeld's admissions, and the Commission's own investigation, the Commission finds that Judge Dubbeld

did in fact violate the aforementioned Canon through the course of conduct outlined above, and that these findings are supported by clear and convincing evidence.

Discussion

Judge Dubbeld's actions, and the actions of her campaign, violated Canon 7 in that they mislead the public, raised an appearance of impropriety, and reflected poorly on judicial independence. This Court has stated how personal solicitation can affect the appearance of the Judiciary, "[moreover], personal solicitation of campaign funds, even by mass mailing, raises an appearance of impropriety and calls into question, in the public's mind, the judge's impartiality. Thus, "[t]o protect the independence of the judiciary, the right of judges to engage in political activity has been restricted." *The Florida Bar v. Williams-Yulee*, 138 So. 3d 379 (Fla. 2014), (quoting re Code of Judicial Conduct (Canons 1, 2, & 7A(1)(b)), 603 So.2d at 497).

The Comision believes that Judge Dubbeld's actions were misleading to the public. The Florida Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee has advised that "[to] accept an endorsement from another candidate running for office would impermissibly create the appearance that the judicial candidate was running as part of a slate." Fla. JEAC Op. 10-14 (citing *In re Kay*, 508 So. 2d

329 (Fla. 1987) and Canon 7A(1)(b)). Here, that concern is raised because some of the individuals were engaged in campaigning during the same election cycle.

Mitigation

Judge Dubbeld admitted to her misconduct and has cooperated with the Commission in all respects during this inquiry. She has remorse that her conduct could have misled the public or reflected poorly on judicial independence. She hopes to rectify this, in part, by taking responsibility for her misconduct, accepting the sanction, and ensuring that any potential future campaign's do not commit misconduct. She has been barred since 2006 and has no prior Judicial or Attorney discipline. Further, it is her hope that a public reprimand and suspension dissuades any other candidates or potential candidates for judicial office to commit the same misconduct.

Recommendation as to Discipline

Judge Dubbeld and the Commission have entered into a Stipulation, recommending that this Court publicly reprimand Judge Dubbeld and subject her to a twenty-day suspension. The Commission believes that this sanction will be sufficient to deter such behavior by Judge Dubbeld in the future, and

to remind the judiciary of the requirements of Canons 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Previously, this Court has accepted the JQC's recommendation of public reprimand and a twenty-five day suspension for multiple Canon 7 violations that included campaign statements that mislead the public and raised an appearance of impropriety. See *Inquiry Concerning Flynn*, 397 So. 3d 40 (Fla. 2024). The Commission believes the imposition of a public reprimand and a suspension is warranted in this instance because of the separate instances and variety of misconduct at play in this campaign. Moreover, the Commission is particularly concerned about the appearance that Judge Dubbeld was personally soliciting donations to her election campaign.

Accordingly, the Commission finds and recommends that the interests of justice, the public welfare, and sound judicial administration will be well served by the public reprimand and twenty-day suspension.

Dated this 17th day of February, 2026

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**THE FLORIDA JUDICIAL
QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

By: */s/ Gregory Coleman*

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