

Committee on Judicial Ethics
Regular Meeting
Thursday, August 21, 2025

Committee members present via *Microsoft Teams*: Judge Karen A. Goodrow (Acting Chair), Professor Carolyn W. Kaas and Judge Daniel J. Klau. Staff present: Attorney Viviana L. Livesay (Secretary), Attorney Cynthia A. Theran (Assistant Secretary), Attorney Steven Bidwell (Assistant Secretary), and Attorney Kevin J. DiAdamo (Assistant Secretary).

MINUTES

- I. Judge Goodrow called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Although publicly noticed, no members of the public were present.
- II. Judge Klau made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2025 Special Meeting. Judge Goodrow seconded. All members approved.
- III. The Committee discussed Informal JE 2025-02 concerning whether a Judicial Official may accept an invitation to attend a lavish birthday event at a first-class resort. The matter was tabled and continued to the September 18, 2025 Regular Meeting.
- IV. The Committee discussed Informal JE 2025-03 concerning whether a Judicial Official may give recorded answers to questions for an academic study that analyzes and evaluates animal cruelty legislation and prosecution of cases, including cases in which the Judicial Official has presided over involving animal-related charges.

Based on the information provided and the opinions from both the Connecticut Committee on Judicial Ethics and the New York Advisory Committee on Judicial Ethics, the Committee concluded that the Judicial Official ("JO") may participate in the study, subject to the following eight (8) conditions:

1. The Judicial Official's participation in the study will not interfere with the proper performance of the judge's judicial duties and will not lead to frequent disqualification of the JO.
2. The Judicial Official does not give opinions that would cast doubt on the Judicial Official's impartiality or indicate that the Judicial Official has a predisposition with respect to a particular case or a particular type(s) of case(s).
3. The Judicial Official is careful not to express any predisposition with respect to any case or type of case and should refrain from any inappropriate comment about pending or impending matters.
4. The Judicial Official should not offer legal advice as to how specific matters should be handled and should exercise caution in answering questions that seek to elicit such advice.
5. The Judicial Official may not respond to any question whose answer would divulge the deliberative processes or mental impressions of the JO or of other JOs in judicial proceedings.

6. The Judicial Official should clarify the discrepancy in the retention period of the interview recording data.
 7. To avoid any issues regarding problematic association(s) and/or getting tied to any institutional controversies that risk running afoul of the Code's requirement that judges act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, the Judicial Officer should make reasonable efforts to ensure that the study in which the JO is participating is run by credible researchers with oversight from a reputable university.
 8. In addition to determining whether the JO may have party or case specific-bias (this should be done for every matter that comes before the JO and if bias is present, then the JO should almost always recuse themselves), the JO should determine whether they have subject matter-bias in actions before them. Specifically, subject matter-bias in animal abuse or neglect actions. If the JO determines that subject matter-bias exists, the JO should consider recusal.
- V. The Committee discussed [Informal JE 2025-04](#) concerning whether a Judicial Official may participate in a fundraising fashion show by appearing on the runway wearing a judicial robe. The Committee unanimously agreed that the Judicial Official should not participate in a fundraising activity that does not concern the law, the legal system or the administration of justice, by appearing in a fashion show (with or without a judicial robe) as it would violate Rule 1.3's proscription against using the prestige of office to advance private interests.
- VI. The Committee discussed the use of the "Ethics Alert" feature and recommended that Informal Opinion JE 2025-01 be featured as an "[Ethics Alert" on the Committee's website](#), as well as on the Judges' Intranet website. The Committee also recommended that the Judicial Branch should distribute Informal Opinion JE 2025-01 to all members of the bench via email. Staff agreed to share this recommendation with External Affairs and the OCCA.
- VII. The meeting adjourned at 10:13 a.m.