



STATE OF TENNESSEE BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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September 24, 2026

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401 Seventh Avenue, North
Nashville, TN 37219-1407

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FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Judge Charles Rich
P.O. Box 2234
Shelbyville, TN 37160

RE: Public Reprimand
File Nos. BJC-2026-06-29 and BJC-2026-07-04

Dear Judge Rich:

This letter shall serve as a public reprimand pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-5-303(e)(2)(B)(i)(c). This reprimand addresses two separate incidents in different cases.

In the first incident, you asked a party appearing in court on a probation matter what she was "bitching about." The second incident involved an order of protection matter in which a litigant stated that he did not understand why he was not receiving justice from the courts. You responded, "maybe you are stupid."

Judges are expected to maintain the highest standards of conduct and dignity of judicial office at all times. Preamble, Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 10(2). This obligation includes the specific responsibility of being dignified and courteous to those with whom the judge deals in an official capacity. Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 10, RJC 2.8(B). Name calling or asking someone in a legal proceeding what they are "bitching about" is neither dignified nor courteous and sets a poor example for everyone present.

Moreover, breaches of appropriate judicial demeanor and temperament, such as those involved here, are of utmost gravity because such behavior undermines public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the judiciary. Thus, when a judge insults, ridicules, or disparages a participant in a legal proceeding, it is clearly misconduct.

Autumn P. Edwards
Legal Assistant
615-685-6156

You described both situations as difficult and frustrating. However, regardless of how frustrating or disrespectful a participant in a legal proceeding may be, the judge must not meet such behavior with intemperate words, a raised voice, or similarly improper demeanor. To the contrary, the more tense or difficult the situation is, the more important it is for the judge to remain dignified and composed and not be drawn into an escalating situation. Just as judges expect those who appear before them to conduct themselves in a temperate and dignified manner, judges are expected to do the same.

The investigative panel decided to impose a public reprimand for the conduct described above, which you have accepted. In imposing this sanction, the panel considered that you previously received a warning concerning your use of intemperate words when you told a litigant to “get the hell out of the courtroom.” In mitigation, the panel noted that you have taken full responsibility for your conduct, have made no excuses, and that you have fully cooperated with disciplinary counsel throughout this matter.

In short, the conduct described above fails to meet the standards of conduct expected of those privileged to hold judicial office. The Board trusts that the reprimand imposed today will cause you to avoid any future conduct that gives even the appearance of any impropriety or the display of any undignified behavior.

Sincerely,

Tony A. Childress

Chancellor Tony A. Childress
Board Chair