



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 24-0167

PUBLIC ADMONITION

**HONORABLE MARINA CHAVEZ-SOTO
EL PASO MUNICIPAL COURT
EL PASO, EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on April 3-4, 2024, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Marina Chavez-Soto, El Paso Municipal Court, in El Paso, El Paso County, Texas. Judge Chavez-Soto was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and did not provide a written response.

After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following findings and conclusions:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Marina Chavez-Soto, was a judge of the El Paso Municipal Court, in El Paso, El Paso County, Texas.
2. Judge Chavez-Soto was required to take 16 hours of judicial education every Academic Year¹ as a municipal judge.
3. Judge Chavez-Soto did not complete the required 16 hours of judicial education for the 2022-2023 Academic Year.
4. Judge Chavez-Soto did not seek a waiver for the educational requirements for the 2022-2023 Academic Year.

¹ Academic Year is from September 1st – August 31st.

5. On December 20, 2023, the Commission mailed a Letter of Inquiry to Judge Chavez-Soto to the mailing address of the court. She was asked to provide a written response on or before January 5, 2024. Judge Chavez-Soto did not respond.
6. On January 5, 2024, the Commission was informed Judge Chavez-Soto resigned as a judge for El Paso Municipal Court on January 3, 2024.
7. On February 14, 2024, the Commission resent the Letter of Inquiry to Judge Chavez-Soto via her personal email address. She was asked to provide a written response on or before February 23, 2024. Judge Chavez-Soto did not respond.
8. On April 10, 2024, the Commission emailed a Tentative Sanction to Judge Chavez-Soto to her personal email address. She was asked to provide her decision regarding the acceptance of the Tentative Sanction by April 19, 2024. Judge Chavez-Soto did not respond.

RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides that a judge shall comply with the law and should act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.
2. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: “A judge...shall maintain professional competence in [the law].”
3. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, that a judge shall not engage in “willful or persistent conduct” that “is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary...”
4. Section 33.001(b)(5) of Texas Government Code provides that a judge’s failure to cooperate with the Commission constitutes “willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of a judge’s duties,” and therefore a violation of Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.
5. Rule 5a(2) of Rules of Judicial Education provides, in relevant parts, “Each Municipal Court Judge will, as an official duty: in each fiscal year thereafter, complete a minimum of 16 hours of instruction from the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center in the performance of the duties of office.”
6. Rule 9b of the Rule of Judicial Education provides: “After the end of each grant year, the Register will report to the applicable Education Committee the name of any judge or judicial officer who had not accumulated the minimum hours of education for that year, including such judges who are leaving office and do not plan to run for another term.”
7. Rule 10a of Rules of Judicial Education states: “Upon receipt of the reports required by Rule 9b, the applicable Education Committee will advise the named judges or judicial officers of the deficiency. Within 30 days of the receipt of such notice, the judge or judicial officer may submit a statement of the reasons that prevented compliance. Thereafter, unless the applicable Committee grants a waiver for good cause shown, it will report the name of the judge or judicial officer to the State Commission on Judicial Conduct by November 1.”

CONCLUSION

Based on the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that the Honorable Marina Chavez-Soto, Judge of the El Paso Municipal Court, in El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, should be publicly admonished for her failure to comply with the law and maintain professional competence in the law when she failed to complete her judicial education for the 2022-2023 Academic Year and failed to cooperate with the Commission's investigation. Judge Chavez-Soto's failure in these respects constituted willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of her duties and cast public discredit upon the judiciary or the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 2A and 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, Section 33.001(b)(5) of the Texas Government Code and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, Section 1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to protect the public and promote public confidence in the judicial system.

Issued this the 6 day of June, 2024.



Gary Steel
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct