



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

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**CJC No. 22-1563**

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**PUBLIC ADMONITION  
AND  
ORDER OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

**HONORABLE LAMAR DE LA CRUZ  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 6  
RIO GRANDE CITY, STARR COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on August 6-7, 2025, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Lamar De La Cruz, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 6, in Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas. Judge De La Cruz was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided 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 Lamar De La Cruz, was a Justice of the Peace for Precinct 6 in Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas.
2. Jesse Clarke ("Clarke"), a Starr County citizen, contacted Judge De La Cruz and requested her assistance to resolve a dispute with Feliberto Bazan ("Bazan") regarding possession of a vehicle in Bazan's custody. The vehicle, a 1980 Chevrolet pickup truck (the "Truck"), had been at Bazan's automotive paint and body shop in Garciasville, Texas for approximately ten years. Bazan knew the owner of the vehicle in question was deceased.
3. On or about June 3, 2022, Judge De La Cruz telephoned Bazan and summoned him to immediately appear in her courtroom to discuss the dispute regarding the Truck.

4. Bazan believed he was being officially summoned to appear before Judge De La Cruz and appeared that afternoon. Judge De La Cruz, Constable Jose Garza, and Clarke were already in the courtroom waiting for Bazan's arrival.
5. Judge De La Cruz facilitated a mediation between Clarke and Bazan, which was contentious at times, and resulted in Bazan turning the Truck over to Clarke and paying Clarke \$500.00 for services that were not performed.
6. On or about June 16, 2022, Bazan contacted Judge De La Cruz to request a formal copy of the summons for the case he was ordered to attend, but no summons was provided to him because no case regarding the dispute was ever filed in Judge De La Cruz's court.
7. In her written responses to the Commission about this matter, Judge De La Cruz stated this matter was a business dispute between two constituents and she facilitated a dialog between them in her court to avoid the costs of litigation.
8. Judge De La Cruz stated, "There is no court case or court cause number regarding the underlying matter herein. There is no underlying filed, pending or dismissed case amongst or between the parties in this matter. And again, no one was ever summoned or otherwise compelled to appear in the courtroom of this Justice court concerning anything related to the underlying business transaction in this matter. [Bazan] was never summoned to appear. His attendance and participation were of his own free will and not otherwise."

#### **RELEVANT STANDARDS AND AUTHORITIES**

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall comply with the law..."
2. Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others..."
3. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: "A judge...shall maintain professional competence in [the law]."
4. Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall be patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity..."
5. Canon 3B(8) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding, or that person's lawyer, the right to be heard according to law."
6. Canon 6C(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A justice of the peace or a municipal court judge, except as authorized by law, shall not directly or indirectly initiate, permit, nor consider *ex parte* or other communications concerning the merits of a pending judicial proceeding."
7. Article I, Section 19 of the Texas Constitution provides, "No citizen of this State shall be deprived of life, liberty, property, privileges or immunities, or in any manner disfranchised, except by the due course of the law of the land."

8. 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 or the administration of justice.”

### 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 Lamar De La Cruz, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 6, in Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas, should be publicly admonished and ordered to obtain additional education for: (1) failing to comply with the law and maintain professional competence in the law when she summoned Feliberto Bazan to appear in her court and facilitated a mediation between Jesse Clarke and Bazan without a case or cause number being filed in her Court; (2) lending the prestige of her office to advance the private interest of Jesse Clarke by facilitating the dispute between Clarke and Bazan; (3) failing to be patient, dignified and courteous towards Bazan when Judge De La Cruz summoned him to her Court to facilitate a mediation between himself and Jesse Clarke; (4) failing to provide Bazan an opportunity to be heard when he was unexpectedly summoned to her Court for her to facilitate a mediation between himself and Jesse Clarke; and (5) having improper *ex parte* communications with Clarke concerning the dispute regarding the Truck. Judge De La Cruz’s failure in these foregoing respects constituted willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of her judicial duties and cast public discredit upon the judiciary and the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 2A, 2B, 3B(2), 3B(4), 3B(8) and 6C(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

Pursuant to this Order, Judge De La Cruz must obtain **two (2) hours** of additional judicial instruction, in addition to her required annual judicial education for Fiscal Year 2026. In particular, the Commission desires that Judge De La Cruz receive the **two (2) hours** of additional education in the area of lending the prestige of her judicial office to advance the private interests of others and *ex parte* communications. Pursuant to the authority contained in Section 33.036 of the Texas Government Code, the Commission authorizes the disclosure of certain information relating to this matter to the Texas Justice Court Training Center to the extent necessary to enable that entity to assign the appropriate mentor for Judge De La Cruz.

Judge De La Cruz shall complete the additional **two (2) hours** of instruction recited above within **60 days** from the date of written notification of the assignment of a mentor. Upon receiving such notice, it is Judge De La Cruz’s responsibility to contact the assigned mentor and schedule the additional education.

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 28 day of August, 2025.



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Gary Steel  
Chair, State Commission on Judicial Conduct