



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC Nos. 22-1490, 22-1533, 22-1547 & 22-1616

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

**HONORABLE AMBER KING
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
MENTONE, LOVING COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on May 13, 2026, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Amber King, Justice of the Peace, in Mentone, Loving County, Texas. Judge King 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, Honorable Amber King was a Justice of the Peace in Mentone, Loving County, Texas.
2. On May 25, 2022, Matthew Jones ("Jones"), William Carr ("Carr"), Ysidro Renteria ("Renteria"), and Becky Hill (the "Four Individuals") appeared in court pursuant to a jury summons. A specific case was not called, and Judge Amber King proceeded to qualify the jury panel.
3. During the jury qualification process, Judge King warned the jury pool they were able to leave if they were not a qualified juror or could be submitted to the District Attorney for aggravated perjury and be held in contempt.
4. Judge King proceeded to ask each individual if they wished to leave. After swearing in the jury pool, Judge King stated:

Okay. So it's come to the Court's attention there are several jurors who are not residents of this county. And you were given the opportunity to leave. Since you have not left you will be held in contempt of court, and you will

be remanded to the Winkler County Jail for obstruction of the proper administration of justice as well as disrespect to the Court.

5. Judge King then named each of the Four Individuals, had them arrested and transported to the Winkler County Detention Center. The Four Individuals were not given notice nor a hearing before being arrested.
6. Judge King entered Orders for Direct Contempt (the “Contempt Orders”), which stated the Four Individuals “refused to comply with this court’s order.” The Contempt Orders did not specify the court order which was allegedly violated.
7. Later that same day, Judge King issued Modified Orders for Direct Contempt, which differed only in that they stated the Four Individuals would be held until 5:00 p.m.
8. Jones, Renteria, and Carr filed a Writ of Mandamus, which was granted by the Loving County Court after finding Judge King “clearly abused her discretion and failed to comply with due process.” Judge Angela Medlin then signed Orders Vacating Modified Orders for Direct Contempt.
9. Prior to the arrests, Judge King and Sheriff Christopher Busse (“Sheriff Busse”) requested Renteria, aa Appraisal Board member, resign from the Appraisal Board because they did not believe he was a resident.¹
10. After losing the 2022 Election for Justice of the Peace, Judge King joined others in a lawsuit contesting the election results styled *Amber Marie King, Holly Diane Jones, and James Alan Sparks v. Angela Medlin, Mozelle Carr, and Ysidro Renteria*, Case No. 22-12-1075 (the “Election Contest Case”).
11. Judge King was deposed during the Election Contest Case. In her deposition, Judge King admitted to: (1) intending to have the Four Individuals arrested the day before they were summoned;² (2) jailing the Four Individuals without regard for due process and without evidence; (3) holding the Four Individuals in contempt and having them arrested based only on her “personal knowledge”; (4) using a personal, not legal, definition of residency to determine if the Four Individuals committed perjury; and (5) deleting information from her county computer and email after receiving a request to preserve evidence.
12. Sheriff Busse was deposed during the Election Contest Case in which he confirmed the Four Individuals were political adversaries of Judge King.
13. Also, during the Election Contest Case, Holly Jones (“Holly”), the former Loving County District Clerk, was deposed. In her deposition, Holly stated she knew Judge King was going to challenge the Four Individuals’ residency prior to their arrest, when Constable Brandon Jones (“Constable Jones”), her husband, told her “[t]hey perjured themselves.”
14. Holly also admitted to texting Judge King when two different citizens registered to vote, because they found it “comical” the citizens felt they were true residents.

¹ Renteria was also a Commissioner of the Loving County Commissioners Court in which Judge King’s husband attempted to have him removed from.

² Later in the deposition, Judge King retracted that she intended to have the Four Individuals arrested.

15. After the Four Individuals' arrest, Judge King, Constable Jones, and Sheriff Busse were personally sued by Jones, Carr, and Renteria in *Matthew Jones et al. v. Amber M. King, et al.*, Case No. PE:22-CV-00030-DC-DF (the "Federal Suit").
16. In response to the Federal Suit, the defendants filed a Motion to Dismiss. A U.S. Magistrate Judge recommended the Motion to Dismiss be denied as to defendants' assertions of: (1) judicial immunity as to Judge King; (2) quasi-judicial immunity as to Sheriff Busse and Constable Jones; and (3) qualified immunity for all defendants for the contempt orders and arrests of the Four Individuals.
17. Numerous articles were published nationally in the aftermath of the Four Individuals' arrests, including "*Big Trouble in Little Loving County, Texas*", written by David J. Goodman for the New York Times dated August 2, 2022. This article detailed the Four Individuals arrests.
18. Within the article, Judge King was pictured in her judicial robe and was quoted saying, "We choose to put our kids on the bus. We choose to drive an hour and a half one way to H-E-B if we want decent groceries. They could live out here if they wanted to. But they don't. They have no intention of living out here."
19. The article also noted that per Steve Simonsen, the Loving County Attorney, "[a]t least two people recently summoned ... have written to say they do not want to appear because they fear being arrested ... and the county has been unable to set a grand jury."
20. In her response to the Commission, Judge King stated that while she was aware ahead of time of the potential for alleged non-residents showing up for jury duty, the arrests and contempt charges were not premeditated nor for any purpose other than protecting "the integrity of the Court" from jurors who "perjure[d] themselves."
21. Judge King expressed that her Election Contest Case deposition statement regarding planning the arrests the day before was "taken out of context," adding that she also testified that no decisions were made until the day of the arrests.
22. Judge King denied any of her actions were improper regarding the deletion of documents and emails from her county computer. She expressed that she believed everything was going to be deleted due to her term ending, and she "forwarded important emails to [herself] to preserve them."
23. Judge King stated, "the preservation letter concerned material potentially relevant to the arrests of the Four Individuals, and not rote policies and procedures or inconsequential emails" which is all she deleted.
24. Judge King denied any coordinated campaign of retaliation against any of the Four Individuals. She reiterated her efforts to remove Renteria from the Appraisal Board was purely out of residency concerns.
25. Judge King acknowledged her Contempt Orders were incorrect because no court order was violated and admitted a better solution would have been to simply excuse the Four Individuals from jury service.
26. Judge King denied that her actions in arresting the Four Individuals violated the Due Process Clause, reiterating that the alleged perjury "constituted direct (summary) contempt, for which immediate punishment is constitutionally permitted."

27. She also denied failing to comply with nor maintain professional competence in the law regarding her decision to charge contempt and arrest the Four Individuals.
28. Finally, she denied any of her actions constituted willful or persistent conduct inconsistent with her judicial duties or that it cast public discredit upon the judiciary.

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 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: “A judge ... shall maintain professional competence in [the law] ...”
3. Canon 3B(5) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides: “A judge shall perform judicial duties without bias or prejudice.”
4. Canon 3B(6) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: “A judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice ...”
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. 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.”
7. 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 on the judiciary or on the administration of justice.”
8. The 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution provides, in relevant part, “...nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; ...”
9. *Ex Parte Knable*, 818 S.W.2d 811 (Tex. Crim. App. 1991) provides, in relevant parts: The Court of Criminal Appeals stated that “a finding of direct contempt does not automatically justify summary punishment of the contemnor” even in situations where a court observes the allegedly contemptuous conduct. The Court found that “the trial court’s authority to summarily punish contemptuous conduct ... flows from observing the conduct and the exigency of the situation.” Exigent circumstances are those which require the judge to act immediately to quell the disruption, violence, disrespect, or physical abuse. The Court also found that where a person “could have been afforded due process protections without disrupting the orderly trial process, the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment mandates that applicant should have been afforded those protections.”

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 Amber King, Justice of the Peace, in Mentone, Loving County, Texas, should be publicly reprimanded for: (1) failing to comply with and maintain professional competence in the law when she: (a) followed a personal, and not legal, definition of residency in issuing the Contempt Orders against the Four Individuals; (b) had the Four Individuals

immediately arrested on direct contempt charges, despite no exigent circumstances existing and denying them due process; and (c) did not identify the court order the Four Individuals violated in the Contempt Orders; (2) performing her judicial duties with bias and prejudice and exhibiting bias and prejudice by words and conduct when she arrested the Four Individuals based only on her personal belief regarding their residency; (3) failing to accord every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding the right to be heard when she immediately ordered the Four Individuals arrested, without providing notice or a hearing; and (4) deleting information from her county email and computer after being requested to preserve evidence. Judge King's failures in the foregoing respects constituted willful and 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, 3B(2), 3B(5), 3B(6) and 3B(8) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct 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 3^d day of June, 2026.



Gary Steel
Chair, State Commission on Judicial Conduct