



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

---

**CJC No. 16-0602-JP**

---

**PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

**HONORABLE TERESA M. MELENDREZ  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 4, PLACE 1  
EAGLE PASS, MAVERICK COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on December 6-8, 2017, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of allegations against the Honorable Teresa M. Melendrez, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4, Place 1, Eagle Pass, Maverick County, Texas. Judge Melendrez was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided written responses. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission entered the following Findings and Conclusion:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Teresa M. Melendrez was Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4, Place 1, in Eagle Pass, Maverick County, Texas.
2. On April 18, 2012, Eluterio Rodriguez d/b/a Classic Auto Sales filed a small claims action in Judge Melendrez's court against Uvaldo Alvarez regarding the sale of a vehicle. Rodriguez also claimed that Alvarez refused to continue making payments on the vehicle after it became damaged. Alvarez was served with citation that same day.
3. On June 8, 2013, the parties agreed in writing that Alvarez would repair or return the vehicle by "Saturday, June 22, 2013."
4. Judge Melendrez issued a criminal summons in a case styled *State of Texas vs. Uvaldo Alvarez*. The summons, which contained no case number, was served on Alvarez by a law enforcement officer. The summons ordered Alvarez to appear in Judge Melendrez's court on August 22, 2013 "pertaining to allegations of an offense against the laws of the said State, to wit: Civil Matter..."
5. Alvarez appeared in court on August 22, 2013, and agreed to repair the vehicle by "Sept. 26, 2013 and show up in court with [the] Blazer."

6. Although the agreement was memorialized in a handwritten notation on the court's docket sheet, no written judgment was issued by the court.
7. According to Rodriguez, after Alvarez failed to repair the vehicle or pay court costs, Judge Melendrez asked Alvarez to return to court for another hearing in the matter on May 19, 2015. However, the court file contains no summons or notice to the parties to appear in court on May 19, 2015.
8. Both Alvarez and Rodriguez appeared before Judge Melendrez on May 19, 2015.
9. At the conclusion of the proceeding, Judge Melendrez made a handwritten notation on the court's docket sheet that stated, "I will give Mr. Uvaldo Alvarez til June 20, 2015 to fix and repair vehicle belonging to Mr. Eluterio Rodriguez," but issued no written judgment.
10. In her written response to the Commission's inquiry, Judge Melendrez admitted that she signed a criminal summons, as her court did not have the correct forms at the time.
11. Judge Melendrez explained that both parties appeared and provided testimony at the hearing on August 22, 2013. She confirmed that the parties reached an agreement at the conclusion of the proceedings that Alvarez would return the vehicle after the repairs.
12. Judge Melendrez further explained that the May 19, 2015 hearing with Rodriguez and Alvarez was informal, as no one was placed under oath and no testimony was taken.
13. Although the parties appeared before her on May 19, 2015, Judge Melendrez confirmed that neither party was provided with a summons or a written notice to appear.
14. Judge Melendrez confirmed that she entered no other orders or a final judgment in the case. She maintains that no final judgment has been entered because Rodriguez never asked for a judgment.

### RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in pertinent part, "A judge shall comply with the law ..."
2. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in pertinent part, "A judge ... shall maintain professional competence in [the law.]"

### CONCLUSION

The Commission concludes based on the facts and evidence before it that Judge Melendrez failed to comply with the law and demonstrated a lack of professional competence in the law by (a) failing to provide the parties with adequate notice of the hearing; (b) issuing criminal summonses in civil cases; and (c) failing to enter a final written, appealable judgment. The Commission concludes that Judge Melendrez's conduct, as described above, constituted willful and/or persistent violations of Canons 2A and 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.<sup>1</sup>

\*\*\*\*\*

---

<sup>1</sup> Judge Melendrez's conduct was the subject of a public sanction and order of additional education from this Commission in March of 2015. She obtained the required education in June of 2015. In recognition of this education, the Commission declines to order further education at this time.

In condemnation of the conduct described above that violated Canons 2A and 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, it is the Commission's decision to issue a **PUBLIC REPRIMAND** to the Honorable Teresa M. Melendrez, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4, Place 1, Eagle Pass, Maverick County, Texas.

Pursuant to the authority contained in Article V, §1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution, it is ordered that the actions described above be made the subject of a **PUBLIC REPRIMAND** by the Commission.

The Commission has taken this action in a continuing effort to protect the public confidence in the judicial system and to assist the state's judiciary in its efforts to embody the principles and values set forth in the Texas Constitution and the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

Issued this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2018.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Hon. Douglas Lung, Chair  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct