



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

---

**CJC No. 19-18-57**

---

**PUBLIC WARNING  
AND  
ORDER OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

**HONORABLE SANDRA PLASTER  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 2  
CANTON, VAN ZANDT COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on April 2, 2020, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Sandra Plaster, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2, Canton, Van Zandt County, Texas. Judge Plaster was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided written responses. 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 Sandra Plaster was the Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2 in Canton, Van Zandt County, Texas.
2. Pattern Energy Group is constructing a solar farm in Van Zandt County called Old Jackson Solar that has generated controversy in the local community and opposition from many residents.
3. Judge Plaster's family owns land that adjoins the property on which the solar farm is being built and she has been publicly vocal about her opposition to the project.
4. In or around February 2019, Judge Plaster approached Department of Public Safety Sergeant Raymond Bradshaw to complain about the commercial vehicles associated with the solar farm project. In a sworn statement to the Commission, Sergeant Bradshaw stated:

JP Plaster engaged me in conversation in the hallway outside my office and asked me to send my Troopers to the south end of the county to target commercial vehicles. JP Plaster stated that there were "Mexican" truck drivers running up and down the roads with no licenses and that they were overweight and tearing up our roads. JP Plaster wanted me to specifically target the dump trucks that worked for a construction firm that was responsible for building [the solar farm].

5. In his sworn statement to the Commission, Corporal Skinner stated that Judge Plaster “seemed to insinuate” that DPS troopers “should and could stop the 18 wheelers coming through that area because she believed most of those driver[s] to be Mexican and possibly not having a driver’s license to operate those trucks.” Further, “Judge Plaster continued to say we as Troopers could make our day by writing tickets to those Solar Farm people trying to come into our area for business.” Corporal Skinner indicated that “it seemed very apparent that [Judge Plaster] did not approve of the Solar Farm trying to come into Van Zandt County and wanted to do everything she could to prevent that from happening.”
6. In a sworn statement to the Commission, Trooper Faglie identified three instances in which Judge Plaster “voiced displeasure, questionable remarks and inappropriate/unprofessional requests” to himself and other Troopers about the solar farm project.
7. According to Trooper Faglie, in or around May of 2019, Judge Plaster went to the DPS Office to ask if any of the Troopers “had contacted any semi-trucks or drivers which were going to or from the Solar Plant project site.” Trooper Faglie averred that when the Troopers informed her they were unaware of any such contact being made, Judge Plaster “began stating that they were all ‘illegal’. . . they were all driving up and down load zone restricted roads and all the drivers they had employed were ‘Mexicans’. . . that ‘None of them had driver[’s] licenses, since they are Mexican.”
8. Several weeks later, Judge Plaster spoke to Trooper Faglie when she called the DPS office to complain that “semi-trucks were driving up and down the load zone restricted roads again and they were all being driven by ‘Mexicans.’” Trooper Faglie stated that Judge Plaster asked him to “send a unit down there to ‘shut them down’” for being overweight and lacking driver’s licenses. When Trooper Faglie explained that the Troopers in Van Zandt County are not able to weigh the vehicles, Judge Plaster responded, “We just need someone to come down here and get them stopped.”
9. Soon after this conversation ended, Judge Plaster called Trooper Faglie’s personal cell phone to tell him the semi-trucks were still “burning up the roads” and to inform him of their exact location. Trooper Faglie told the Commission, “By her immediate knowledge, I was given the understanding [Judge Plaster] was currently driving in the area looking for and possibly following the semi-trucks.”
10. Trooper Kevin Howell received a telephone call from Judge Plaster about overweight commercial vehicles lacking the “correct requirement.” In his sworn statement, Trooper Howell indicated that when he told Judge Plaster they were unable to enforce weight restrictions, she advised him that certain of the drivers did not have “the correct driver’s license” to operate such vehicles.
11. In her written response to the Commission’s inquiry, Judge Plaster acknowledged that she spoke to Sergeant Bradshaw about the commercial vehicles associated with the solar farm project, and that she did so out of her “deep concerns” about the excessive speed at which the vehicles were being operated and the rocks they were throwing off, one of which broke her windshield.
12. Judge Plaster denied giving Sergeant Bradshaw “instructions” to stop the trucks – only expressing her concerns “as a citizen.” Judge Plaster said, “Exactly what I told [Sergeant Bradshaw] I do not recall, other than there were ‘rock-haulers’ in my precinct that were overweight, based upon what I saw and were ‘tearing up’ our roads.”
13. Judge Plaster acknowledged that she communicated with Trooper Faglie and other Troopers about the solar farm vehicles, explaining that she was again expressing personal concern about the rocks being thrown by the trucks.

14. According to Judge Plaster, “If I made a reference to someone Hispanic or Mexican, it was not intended in a racial way. We have many fine Mexican people in this County.” Rather she said if she indicated a driver appeared to be of the Hispanic descent, it was only for identification purposes.

### RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct states that a judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others.
2. Canon 4A(1) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct states that judge shall conduct all of the judge’s extracurricular activities so that they do not “cast reasonable doubt on the judge’s capacity to act impartially as a judge.”

### 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 Sandra Plaster, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 2, Canton, Van Zandt County, Texas, should be publicly warned and ordered to obtain additional education for lending the prestige of her judicial office by requesting law enforcement officers target and issue traffic citations to commercial vehicles associated with a solar farm project that abuts property owned by Judge Plaster’s family and of which she is publicly opposed, in violation of Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct. Further, Judge Plaster’s racially insensitive comments about people of Mexican descent in her communications with law enforcement officers demonstrated an extra-judicial activity which cast reasonable doubt on her capacity to act impartially as a judge, in violation of Canon 4A(1) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

Pursuant to this Order, Judge Plaster must obtain **two (2) hours** of instruction with a mentor, in addition to her required judicial education for Fiscal Year 2020. In particular, the Commission desires that Judge Plaster receive this additional education in the areas of lending the prestige of judicial office and bias and prejudice. Pursuant to the authority contained in §33.036 of the Texas Government Code, the Commission authorizes the disclosure of certain information relating to this matter to the Texas Justice Courts Training Center to the extent necessary to enable that entity to assign the appropriate mentor for Judge Plaster.

Judge Plaster shall complete the additional **two (2) hours** of instruction recited above within **60 days** from the date of written notification from the Commission of the assignment of a mentor. Upon receiving such notice, it is Judge Plaster’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, §1-a (8) of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to promote confidence in and high standards for the judiciary.

Issued this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.



---

Honorable David C. Hall  
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct