



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

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**CJC No. 19-0078**

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**PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

**HONORABLE BILLY WILLIAMS  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 3  
SAN AUGUSTINE, SAN AUGUSTINE COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on August 5-6, 2020, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Billy Williams, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3, San Augustine, San Augustine County, Texas. Judge Williams was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response. Judge Williams appeared before the Commission on August 6, 2020 and gave testimony.

**BACKGROUND**

On September 18, 2018, Judge Williams drove his vehicle on a public street in front of the home of Matthew Cannon ("Cannon") at a speed that Cannon believed to be excessive. After Judge Williams stopped and rolled down his window, Cannon approached the vehicle and observed Judge Williams holding a gun in his hand. Cannon asked Judge Williams to slow down, and the judge responded he would be back to speak with Mr. Cannon and drove away.

Approximately ten minutes later, Judge Williams returned to Cannon's home and exited his vehicle. Judge Williams and Cannon engaged in a heated exchange near the street end of Cannon's driveway, during which Judge Williams asked Cannon what he needed, and Cannon expressed concern about the judge's driving and the safety of his 12-year-old son. The judge advised Mr. Cannon that he was responding to an emergency, and Mr. Cannon asked Judge Williams if he was a "cop." In his testimony before the Commission, Judge Williams acknowledged he initially told Mr. Cannon he was a cop but stated he "immediately" corrected himself and told him he was a judge.

During this exchange, Cannon told Judge Williams he objected to the judge "brandishing" his firearm during their earlier interaction. Judge Williams then removed a handgun from his pocket, asking "Is this what you are talking about?" and displayed the handgun in plain view of Cannon and his wife.

During his appearance before the Commission, Judge Williams acknowledged that during his initial interaction with Cannon, he was holding his gun in the palm of his hand against the steering wheel of his vehicle, and that doing so violated the law regarding the carrying of concealed weapons. Judge Williams further acknowledged that during his subsequent interaction with Cannon he removed the gun from his pocket and displayed it to Cannon, again in violation of the law.

After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following Findings and Conclusion:

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Billy Williams was the Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3 in San Augustine, San Augustine County, Texas.
2. On September 18, 2018, when Judge Williams initially stopped to speak with Cannon, he was holding his gun in the palm of his hand against the steering wheel of the vehicle and it remained in plain view of Cannon during the entirety of this exchange.
3. Soon after, Judge Williams returned to Cannon’s residence, exited his vehicle, and engaged in a heated exchange with Cannon in his driveway, during which Judge Williams pulled his gun from his pocket and displayed it to Cannon and his wife.
4. Both exchanges between Judge Williams and Mr. Cannon took place in public, on a public road or at the end of Mr. Cannon’s driveway, in a residential neighborhood.

### **RELEVANT STANDARDS**

1. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution prohibits a judge from engaging in willful conduct that casts public discredit upon the judiciary.
2. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct states, in pertinent part, 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.”
3. Section 46.035(a) of the Texas Penal Code states that the holder of a concealed carry license “commits an offense if the license holder carries a handgun on or about the license holder's person under the authority of Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code, and intentionally displays the handgun in plain view of another person in a public place. It is an exception to the application of this subsection that the handgun was partially or wholly visible but was carried in a shoulder or belt holster by the license holder.”

Text of subsection as added by Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 437 (H.B. [910](#)), Sec. 47

### **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 Billy Williams, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 3, San Augustine, San Augustine County, Texas, should be publicly reprimanded for casting public discredit upon the judiciary and failing to comply with the law by displaying a handgun in a manner contrary to Texas law, in violation of Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution and Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

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

Issued this the 8<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2020.



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David Hall

Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct