

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
JUDICIAL CONDUCT COMMISSION**

IN RE THE MATTER OF:

**BOLTON BEVINS, DISTRICT COURT JUDGE
14TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT**

AGREED PUBLIC REPRIMAND

Judge Bolton Bevins is a District Court Judge for Kentucky's 14th Judicial District. Judge Bevins has waived formal proceedings and has agreed to this disposition.

Judge Bevins has engaged in violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct, including (1) failure to exercise judicial temperament, (2) failure to follow the law, and (3) hostile, impatient, undignified and discourteous conduct demonstrating bias, lack of impartiality, lack of judicial decorum, and abuse of judicial authority. Judge Bevins' conduct undermines public confidence in the integrity, impartiality, and independence of the judiciary. This conduct included gross, persistent, and unrestrained erroneous use of the contempt power and failure to follow the proper procedures set forth in the law. See *Jameson v. Judicial Conduct Commission*, 701 S.W.3d 236, 238 (Ky. 2024), citing *Nicholson v. Judicial Retirement and Removal Commission*, 562 S.W.2d 306 at 310 (Ky. 1978).

The Commission comprehensively reviewed the video record of numerous matters before Judge Bevins, which were provided to Judge Bevins for his review and established the following:

On June 17, 2024, during a hearing involving a juvenile defendant, Judge Bevins did not permit the juvenile or his counsel to respond to his questions, angrily stated that he was tired of listening to the "medical excuse crap" and told the defendant to "Go!" As the defendant began exiting the courtroom as Judge Bevins had directed, Judge Bevins raised his voice and addressed the defendant in a very loud and inappropriate manner stating, "get back in here". Once the defendant was brought back into the courtroom, his attorney and the

juvenile tried to speak, but Judge Bevins angrily yelled at them. Judge Bevins held the defendant in contempt and detained him for eleven (11) days without giving the defendant or his counsel prior notice or an opportunity to respond or speak.

Later on June 17, 2024, during a disposition hearing for a juvenile defendant, upon learning that the juvenile had failed to complete a grade in school, Judge Bevins stated that he would like to send the defendant “to detention for a month like [he] did the other case.” Subsequently, as his custodian began testifying, she mentioned a new allegation against the juvenile defendant. After hearing her testimony, without prior notice or an opportunity for the juvenile or counsel to respond or speak, Judge Bevins stated that he was going to sentence the defendant to two (2) weeks in jail for failing a grade. When counsel for the juvenile stated that such a decision was not an appropriate sanction, Judge Bevins did not allow the attorney to make an argument. As the juvenile was being shackled, Judge Bevins became angry and asked defendant if this is what he wanted for his life and mentioned the new allegation from the custodian. When the juvenile attempted to answer, he angrily yelled for him not to say anything, twice, stated in a loud and irritated voice “I don’t care”, and referred back to the new allegation. When the juvenile attempted, again, to explain, Judge Bevins then very loudly told him to “shut up” and “get out”, and did not permit him to respond, nor permit any testimony to be taken regarding the new allegation. As the juvenile was being led out, he muttered an obscenity under his breath audible on the video and directed at Judge Bevins, and the Judge then angrily said he was extending the detention to a month.

On December 5, 2024, during a preliminary hearing of an adult defendant, Judge Bevins cross-examined a witness and raised his voice at the witness stating that she “better be sure” of what she was testifying to. Judge Bevins then accused the witness of lying and would not allow her

to explain or otherwise respond. After stating that he would hold the witness in contempt and interrupting the defense counsel, who was attempting to request a bond reduction, Judge Bevins in an irritated and inappropriately sharp tone refused to hear argument from the defense and slammed his case book down.

On January 10, 2025, during a review hearing with a juvenile defendant, Judge Bevins stated that the defendant would be held in contempt despite no motion by the prosecution, notice, or hearing, based upon a report in the file which the defense had not seen. When the juvenile's attorney stated that the juvenile was entitled to have a written motion for contempt and a hearing, Judge Bevins became agitated and asked the county attorney to make a motion for contempt. When the county attorney hesitated and asked what conduct the judge was referring to, Judge Bevins referred to the report, and said "what else does the county need?" When the county attorney did not respond, he then asked again, "Is there a motion from the county for contempt." The county attorney then said, "yes." The juvenile's attorney again stated that the juvenile was entitled to a written notice of the contempt allegations and time to prepare for a hearing. The judge became irritated, and then asked how much time he needed. The juvenile's attorney stated he didn't know as he hadn't seen a written motion. Judge Bevins angrily said to the juvenile, "I don't know what to do with you, frankly." While the judge looked at his calendar for a possible hearing date, he said he would order the juvenile onto an ankle monitor and house arrest. When the defense counsel objected that a hearing had not yet been held, the judge in an inappropriately sharp tone said "are you saying I don't have the right" and laughed when the defense counsel stated that a hearing had to be held. After the juvenile defendant allegedly "smirked" at Judge Bevins while responding to the judge's question, Judge Bevins then became visibly exasperated, throwing

his pen down, before holding the defendant in contempt without prior notice and a hearing, and detaining him for six (6) days.

On February 3, 2025, during a review hearing, Judge Bevins questioned a juvenile defendant about a new allegation regarding alleged absences from school. When the juvenile defendant began answering and attempting to contest the number of absences, and his attorney attempted to point out that it was only one day, Judge Bevins abruptly raised his voice and banged on the desk stating that if the defendant missed one more day of school, he would send him to jail. He did not permit the attorney to speak. Judge Bevins also raised his voice and very loudly stated, “no, I don’t want to hear anything” and “get out” to the Defendant’s mother when she asked to speak.

On February 18, 2025, a defendant charged with theft of mail was attempting to enter a plea, which required, in part, that he make a statement under oath regarding the event which included another person. During the defendant making that statement, the prosecutor expressed the belief the defendant was not being truthful and was inclined to rescind the plea offer, and Judge Bevins accused the defendant of lying. Then, while a police officer was testifying, Judge Bevins interrupted and told the defendant that he would be held in contempt for 30 days, but would not permit him to respond. He then instructed the police officer to investigate the defendant’s alleged perjury by reviewing camera footage.

On March 6, 2025, during a hearing on a motion to revoke probation for not reporting to a supervision company, the defendant testified that she was unaware of any order for probation and therefore did not report as required. There was no order in the file, no agreement with a supervision company, and no notation in the record that she was to report for probation. Judge Bevins inappropriately raised his voice at the defendant, told her not to say anything, and held her

in contempt, ordering her to serve two weeks in detention. Judge Bevins, however, never issued a contempt order, nor did he expressly state that any contempt order would be rescinded.

On March 26, 2025, an arraignment was conducted in which the defendant required an interpreter but did not have an attorney present. Judge Bevins asked the defendant if she had a driver's license and she indicated she had taken the test but had not passed. Judge Bevins indicated she could not drive until she did. Judge Bevins also told the defendant that if she were to receive another charge, he was going to "put [her] in jail." After being informed of more of the case details by the County Attorney, Judge Bevins stated "what kind of mental defect" causes someone to act the way the defendant acted. When the Defendant attempted to respond that the circumstances were not those which were alleged in the citation, Judge Bevins ordered her not to speak.

On April 21, 2025, a Defendant interrupted Judge Bevins several times during a hearing. Judge Bevins raised his voice and ordered the court room bailiff to "take" the Defendant away ordering that she be held in contempt. After approximately 20 minutes, Defendant was brought back to the courtroom. Visibly upset, Judge Bevins raised his voice and slammed his hand on the desk ordering that Defendant treat him with "deference and respect" before ordering her to "go."

All of these actions by Judge Bevins demonstrate bias, a lack of impartiality, a lack of judicial decorum, an abuse of judicial authority, and undermine public confidence in the integrity, impartiality, and independence of the judiciary.

The Commission concludes that Judge Bevins' conduct violated SCR 4.020(1)(b) by engaging in misconduct in office. The Commission further concludes that Judge Bevins violated the following Rules of the Code of Judicial Conduct:

Rule 1.1 which requires judges to comply with the law, and **Rule 1.2** which requires judges to uphold and promote the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall

avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety. Actual improprieties include violations of law, court rules, or provisions of this Code. The test for appearance of impropriety is whether the conduct would create in reasonable minds a perception that the judge engaged in conduct that reflects adversely on the judge's honesty, impartiality, temperament, or fitness to serve as a judge. Canon 1, comment 5.

Rule 2.2 which requires judges to be impartial and to uphold and apply the law.

Rule 2.6 which requires a judge to allow persons to be heard.

Rule 2.8(B) which requires judges to be patient, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, court staff, court officials, and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity.

Based on the foregoing conduct, Judge Bevins is hereby publicly reprimanded. In rendering its disposition, the Commission duly considered that Judge Bevins fully cooperated in the matter, agreed to this sanction, has already implemented corrective measures to address the issues raised, and has committed to receiving additional training and mentoring, including a particular program recommended by a member of the Commission.

Agreed PUBLIC REPRIMAND

Date: 3/19/2026



R. MICHAEL SULLIVAN, CHAIR

Agreed to:



Hon. Bolton Bevins, District Court Judge

Mr. Redford recused from the matter.