

MAY 29 2024

David J. Smith  
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the  
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

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Judicial Complaint No. 11-24-90067

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**ORDER**

An individual has filed a Complaint against a United States district judge under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980, 28 U.S.C. §§ 351–364, and the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings of the Judicial Conference of the United States.

**Background**

The record shows that the Subject Judge was assigned to a criminal case in which a former political office holder is one of the defendants. The Subject Judge has issued various orders in the case, and the case remains pending.

**Complaint**

Complainant alleges the Subject Judge must recuse herself from the case or be removed from the case by this Court. Complainant states that this Court previously reversed an order she

issued and told her she “overstepped,” and that she has given the defendant “favor in all steps along the way than any other Defendant would get.” Complainant contends the Subject Judge has delayed the proceedings by allowing the defendant to bring frivolous motions and failing to rule on those motions. Finally, Complainant quotes an individual who stated the Subject Judge had no intention of having the case proceed to trial and that she was biased and incompetent.

### **Discussion**

Judicial-Conduct Rule 4(b)(1) provides in part that “[c]ognizable misconduct does not include an allegation that calls into question the correctness of a judge’s ruling, including a failure to recuse.” The Commentary on Rule 4 explains the rationale for this rule as follows:

Rule 4(b)(1) tracks the Act, 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(ii), in excluding from the definition of misconduct allegations “[d]irectly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling.” This exclusion preserves the independence of judges in the exercise of judicial authority by ensuring that the complaint procedure is not used to collaterally call into question the substance of a judge’s decision or procedural ruling. Any allegation that calls into question the correctness of an official decision or procedural ruling of a judge — without more — is merits-related.

Furthermore, Judicial-Conduct Rule 4(b)(2) provides that cognizable misconduct does not include “an allegation about delay

in rendering a decision or ruling, unless the allegation concerns an improper motive in delaying a particular decision or habitual delay in a significant number of unrelated cases.” The “Commentary on Rule 4” states that “a complaint of delay in a single case is excluded as merits-related.”

To the extent the Complaint requests that the Subject Judge be removed from the above-described case, neither the Chief Circuit Judge nor the Judicial Council has the authority to take this action under the Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings. *See* Judicial-Conduct Rule 11 (Chief Judge’s Review); Judicial-Conduct Rule 19 (Judicial-Council Disposition of Petition for Review); Judicial-Conduct Rule 20 (Judicial-Council Action Following Appointment of Special Committee).

The Complaint fails to present a basis for a finding of misconduct. To the extent Complainant’s allegations concern the substance of the Subject Judge’s official actions, rulings, findings, and orders in the above-described case, the allegations are directly related to the merits of the Subject Judge’s decisions or procedural rulings. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(B). Complainant’s remaining claims are based on allegations lacking sufficient evidence to raise an inference that the Subject Judge was biased or otherwise not impartial, acted with an illicit or improper motive, is incompetent, or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D). Although this complaint process is not the appropriate way to seek review of the Subject Judge’s orders, those orders are nevertheless subject to appellate review in the normal course.

For these reasons, this Complaint is **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.  
Chief Judge