

JAN 16 2026

David J. Smith
Clerk

CONFIDENTIAL

Before the Chief Judge of the
Eleventh Judicial Circuit

Judicial Complaint No. 11-25-90283

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 establishes Complainant filed a civil complaint against a state-court judge, and the defendant filed a motion to dismiss. The Subject Judge entered an order granting the motion and dismissing the case with prejudice on the ground that it was barred by judicial immunity. In the order, the Subject Judge included “Chief Judge” before the defendant’s name.

Complaint

Complainant alleges the Subject Judge violated the Code of Conduct by using “a special honorific” of “judge” to refer to the defendant, who was the Subject Judge’s “former boss.” Complainant states, “Singling out a defendant for special styling based on their professional title” violated the principle that judges should avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in the “context of a legal case where all parties should be equal before the court.” He contends the Subject Judge “did not conform with court rules and standards prescribing neutral, un[i]form conventions for case styles” and improperly “extended a special styling” for the defendant. Complainant alleges the Subject Judge exhibited personal bias by dismissing the complaint with prejudice, when dismissals based on immunity may only be dismissed without prejudice. Finally, he states he views the Subject Judge’s actions “as an inappropriate power flex.” He attached documents to his Complaint.

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.

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, findings, rulings, 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 acted with an illicit or improper motive, was biased or otherwise not impartial, violated the Code of Conduct for United States Judges, or otherwise engaged in misconduct. Judicial-Conduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D). For these reasons, this Complaint is **DISMISSED**.

/s/ William H. Pryor Jr.
Chief Judge