

Committee on Judicial Ethics
Special Meeting
Wednesday, January 3, 2024

Committee members present via *Microsoft Teams*: Judge Kimberly A. Knox (Chair), Judge Robert B. Shapiro, Professor Carolyn W. Kaas, Judge Daniel J. Klau, and Judge Karen A. Goodrow. Staff present: Attorney Viviana L. Livesay (Secretary), Attorney Steven Bidwell (Assistant Secretary), Attorney Kevin DiAdamo (Assistant Secretary), Attorney Martin Libbin (Assistant Secretary), Attorney Cynthia A. Theran (Assistant Secretary), and Carolina E. Marin.

MINUTES

- I. Judge Knox called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Although publicly noticed, no members of the public were present.
- II. Judge Shapiro made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 27, 2023 Special Meeting. Judge Klau seconded the motion. The Committee approved the minutes. Judge Goodrow abstained from this vote.
- III. The Committee continued its discussion of **Informal JE 2023-08** concerning whether a Judicial Official (1) may attend the Hartford Mayor's Ball on 1/4/2024, (2) may sit with their spouse at a table purchased by the law firm at which the spouse is a partner and (3) is required to pay for their ticket.

The Committee reviewed the revised staff recommendation and agreed that the Rules 1.2 (Promoting Confidence in the Judiciary) and 4.1 (Political Activities of Judges in General) pose the greatest challenge to the JO's attendance. The members discussed the fact that the city of Hartford frequently appears as a litigant before the courts and that the JO's attendance at the event may appear to be an endorsement of the current administration. The sponsorship opportunities of up to \$10,000 were also noted as a concern. Based upon on the facts available to Committee from the event's website and in news articles, the Committee determined that an inference can be made that "Arunan for Hartford" is a political organization associated with the new administration. Attorney Bidwell also noted that he reached out to the organizers of the event to obtain more information but did not get a response.

Judge Goodrow made a motion to vote on whether the Judicial Official may attend the named event. Professor Kaas seconded. All five Committee members present concluded that the Judicial Official should not attend the Hartford Mayor's Ball. Attorney Bidwell was asked to make the discussed revisions to the opinion and was also instructed to verbally inform the JO of the decision.

- IV. New Business: None.
- V. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 a.m.