



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

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**CJC No. 23-0509**

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**PUBLIC ADMONITION**

**HONORABLE JASON CRUZ  
NATALIA MUNICIPAL COURT  
NATALIA, MEDINA COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on October 4, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Jason Cruz, Natalia Municipal Court, Natalia, Medina County, Texas. Judge Cruz was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and did not provide a written response.

After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following findings and conclusions:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Jason Cruz, was a judge of the Natalia Municipal Court, in Natalia, Medina County, Texas.
2. Judge Cruz was required to take 16 hours of judicial education every Academic Year as a municipal judge.
3. Judge Cruz did not complete his 16 hours of judicial education for the 2021-2022 Academic Year.
4. Judge Cruz did not seek a waiver for his educational requirements for the 2021-2022 Academic Year.
5. On April 27, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct mailed a Letter of Inquiry to Judge Cruz to the mailing address of his court. He was given until May 12, 2023 to respond. Judge Cruz did not respond.

6. On May 31, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct resent the Letter of Inquiry to Judge Cruz via email. He was given until June 14, 2023 to respond. Judge Cruz did not respond.
7. On October 10, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct sent the tentative sanction to Judge Cruz via certified mail to the mailing address of his court and email. He was given until October 20, 2023 to respond. Judge Cruz did not respond.
8. On October 31, 2023, Staff called Judge Cruz at his law firm's phone number, which is on the State Bar of Texas website, regarding the tentative sanction and left a message on the voicemail. Judge Cruz did not return Staff's phone call.
9. On November 6, 2023, Staff called Judge Cruz at his law firm's phone number regarding the tentative sanction and left a message on the voicemail. Judge Cruz did not return Staff's phone call.

### **RELEVANT STANDARDS**

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides 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.
2. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: "A judge...shall maintain professional competence in [the law]."
3. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, that a judge shall not engage in "willful or persistent conduct" that "is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary..."
4. Section 33.001(b)(5) of Texas Government Code provides that a judge's failure to cooperate with the Commission constitutes "willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of a judge's duties," and therefore a violation of Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.
5. Rule 5a(2) of Rules of Judicial Education provides, in relevant parts, "Each Municipal Court Judge will, as an official duty: in each fiscal year thereafter, complete a minimum of 16 hours of instruction from the Texas Municipal Courts Education Center in the performance of the duties of office."
6. Rule 9b of the Rule of Judicial Education provides: "After the end of each grant year, the Register will report to the applicable Education Committee the name of any judge or judicial officer who had not accumulated the minimum hours of education for that year, including such judges who are leaving office and do not plan to run for another term."
7. Rule 10a of Rules of Judicial Education states: "Upon receipt of the reports required by Rule 9b, the applicable Education Committee will advise the named judges or judicial officers of the deficiency. Within 30 days of the receipt of such notice, the judge or judicial officer may submit a statement of the reasons that prevented compliance. Thereafter, unless the applicable Committee grants a waiver for good cause shown, it will report the name of the judge or judicial officer to the State Commission on Judicial Conduct by November 1."

## 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 Jason Cruz, Judge of the Natalia Municipal Court, Natalia, Medina County, Texas, should be publicly admonished for his failure to comply with the law and maintain professional competence in the law when he failed to complete his judicial education for the 2021-2022 Academic Year and failed to cooperate with the Commission's investigation. Judge Cruz's failure in these respects constituted willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties and cast public discredit upon the judiciary or the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 2A and 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, Section 33.001(b)(5) of the Texas Government Code and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, Section 1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to protect the public and promote public confidence in the judicial system.

Issued this the 6<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2023.

  
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Gary Steel  
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct