

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE THIRD CIRCUIT

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J.C. No. 03-18-90219

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IN RE: COMPLAINT OF JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT  
OR DISABILITY

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ORIGINAL PROCEEDINGS UNDER 28 U.S.C. § 351

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MEMORANDUM OPINION

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(Filed: January 23, 2019)

PRESENT: SMITH, *Chief Judge*.

This complaint is filed under the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, 28 U.S.C. §§ 351-64, against a United States District Judge (the “Subject Judge”).<sup>1</sup> For the reasons discussed below, the complaint will be dismissed.

The Judicial Conduct and Disability Act provides a remedy if a federal judge “has engaged in conduct prejudicial to the effective and expeditious administration of the business of the courts.” 28 U.S.C. § 351(a). A chief judge may dismiss a complaint if, after review, he or she finds it is not cognizable under the statute, is directly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling, or is frivolous or lacks sufficient evidence to raise an inference of misconduct. 28 U.S.C. §§ 352(b)(1)(A)(i)-(iii).

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<sup>1</sup> To the extent Complainant’s allegations concern actions by individuals who are not covered by the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act, including prison employees and others, the allegations will not be addressed in this opinion. *See* 28 U.S.C. §§ 351, 352(b)(1)(A)(i); Rule 4, *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings*.

Complainant is the wife of an inmate who disputes the penalty imposed upon him in prison after he tested positive for drug use. The inmate filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus alleging that the prison's test was wrong and that an independent lab test showed that he had not used drugs. Complainant's husband's habeas petition was recently dismissed. The present complaint consists of photocopies of documents filed by the inmate in the District Court proceedings and copies of email correspondence that have been attached to a complaint form.

It is unclear what, if any, allegations of judicial misconduct are being made. I will nonetheless address the complaint as Complainant affirmed "under penalty of perjury" that her allegations are true and correct in accordance with Rule 6. Rule 8(a), *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings* (requiring circuit clerk to open a file for a complaint filed under Rule 6). Since it appears Complainant seeks to challenge the Subject Judge's decisions or rulings in her husband's habeas action, her complaint is dismissed as merits-related because such allegations are not cognizable in this proceeding. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(ii); Rules 3(h)(3)(A), 11(c)(1)(B), *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings*. The "misconduct procedure [under the Act] is not designed as a substitute for, or supplement to, appeals or motions for reconsideration. Nor is it designed to provide an avenue for collateral attacks or other challenges to judges' rulings." *In re Memorandum of Decision of Judicial Conference Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability*, 517 F.3d 558, 561 (U.S. Jud. Conf. 2008). Accordingly, all merits-related claims are dismissed.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the complaint is dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 352(b)(1)(A)(i) and (ii).

s/ D. Brooks Smith  
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Chief Judge

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ORDER

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(Filed: January 23, 2019)

PRESENT: SMITH, *Chief Judge*.

On the basis of the foregoing opinion entered on this date, it is ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that the written complaint brought pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 351 is hereby dismissed under 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(i) and (ii).

This order constitutes a final order under 28 U.S.C. § 352(c). Complainant is notified in accordance with Rules 11(g)(3) and 18, *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings*, of the right to appeal this decision by the following procedure:

Rule 18(a) Petition. A complainant or subject judge may petition the Judicial Council of the Third Circuit for review.

Rule 18(b) Time. A petition for review must be filed in the Office of the Circuit Executive within **42 days** after the date of the chief judge's order.

18(b) Form. The petition should be in letter form, addressed to the Circuit Executive, and in an envelope marked "Misconduct Petition" or "Disability

Petition.” The name of the subject judge must not be shown on the envelope. The letter should be typewritten or otherwise legible. It should begin with “I hereby petition the judicial council for review of . . .” and state the reasons why the petition should be granted. It must be signed. There is no need to enclose a copy of the original complaint.

The full text of the *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings* is available from the Office of the Circuit Executive and on the Court of Appeals’ internet site, [www.ca3.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov).

s/ D. Brooks Smith  
Chief Judge

Dated: January 23, 2019