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Attorneys for Respondent Judge Deborah “Kim” Christopher

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

INQUIRY CONCERNING COMPLAINT
OF JUDICIAL STANDARDS
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF
MONTANA,

Complainant,

vs.

JUDGE DEBORAH KIM
CHRISTOPHER,

Respondent.

Case No. PR 24-0035

**RESPONSE TO FORMAL
COMPLAINT**

COMES NOW, The Honorable Deborah “Kim” Christopher, District Court
Judge, through her counsel, and admits, denies, alleges, and avers as follows:

1. Respondent admits the allegations in Paragraph 1.
2. Respondent denies the allegations in Paragraph 2.
3. As to Paragraph 3, Respondent admits she canceled certain “Law and Motion” days in 2021, for court business, judicial meetings, holidays, and personal reasons, including illness. Respondent denies the remaining allegations, and

affirmatively states these allegations fail to allege a violation of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct.

4. As to Paragraph 4, Respondent admits she cancelled certain “Law and Motion” days in 2022, for court business, judicial meetings, holidays, and personal reasons, including illness. Respondent denies the remaining allegations, and affirmatively states these allegations fail to allege a violation of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct.

5. As to Paragraph 5, Respondent admits she issued an administrative notice, and that document speaks for itself. Respondent further admits that Judge John Larson and Judge Karen Townsend (Ret.) covered certain “Law and Motion” days. Respondent denies the remaining allegations, and affirmatively states these allegations fail to allege a violation of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct.

6. As to Paragraph 6, Respondent admits the referenced quotation is an accurate excerpt from Rule 2.5(A) of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct, and affirmatively states that she complied with Rule 2.5(A).

7. Respondent denies the allegations in Paragraph 7.

8. Respondent denies the allegations in Paragraph 8.

9. Respondent denies any allegation not specifically admitted herein.

AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

10. The Complaint fails to state a claim for violation of the Montana Code of Judicial Conduct and the allegations cannot be proven by clear and convincing evidence.

11. Respondent asserts the Complaint is barred by the equitable doctrine of laches.

12. Respondent expressly reserves and does not waive any rights or claims under applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Montana Human Rights Act, Montana judicial branch human resource policies, practices or procedures, and Montana Judges Retirement System plans or policies.

13. Respondent expressly reserves and does not waive her rights guaranteed by Articles 4 and 17 of the Montana Constitution and Amendment 14 to the United States Constitution.

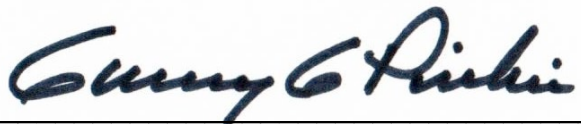
14. Respondent incorporates by reference herein all available applicable affirmative defenses available at law or in equity. Discovery and hearing preparation may render one or more affirmative defenses applicable or inapplicable. These affirmative defenses are raised to avoid waiver. Respondent will dismiss any affirmative defenses not reasonably supported by facts learned in discovery and /or applicable law. These affirmative defenses are raised in response to the allegations contained in the Complaint as a recognition that the pleadings, discovery, and

hearing preparation necessitate a thorough examination and evaluation of this case, and the Commission should have available for consideration of all defenses which may be applicable to this case.

WHEREFORE, Respondent, having fully answered the Complaint, pray the Complaint is dismissed in Respondent's favor, for recovery of her costs incurred herein as allowed by applicable law and procedure, and for all other just and proper relief.

DATED this 21st day of February 2024.

CONNER, MARR & PINSKI, PC

BY: 

Gregory G. Pinski

P. O. Box 3028

Great Falls, MT 59403-3028

Attorneys for Respondent

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Gregory G. Pinski, hereby certify that I have served true and accurate copies of the foregoing Response/Objection - Other to the following on 02-21-2024:

Deborah Kim Christopher (Respondent)
106 4th Ave. E.
Polson MT 59860
Service Method: E-mail Delivery

Shelly Smith (Committee Staff)
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Electronically Signed By: Gregory G. Pinski
Dated: 02-21-2024