

# Supreme Court of Florida

No. AOSC14-66

IN RE: DILIGENT PERFORMANCE OF JUDICIAL DUTIES

## ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

Article V, section 2(a), of the Florida Constitution invests in this Court the authority and responsibility for the administrative supervision of all courts in this State, including the promulgation of canons of judicial conduct and establishment of policy concerning the judiciary in rules of judicial administration.<sup>1</sup> The Code of Judicial Conduct reflects the commitment of Florida's judicial branch to upholding the high standards of judicial and personal conduct upon which public trust in our courts depends. We recognize that the vast majority of all judges in this State act with diligence and faithful commitment to their judicial duties. We also recognize that the judiciary has a duty to ensure that all judges consistently meet their obligations under the Code.

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1. See Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.205(a)(1)(A).

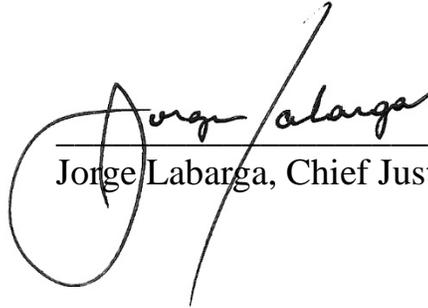
In all things, “a judge shall respect and comply with the law and shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.” Canon 2A, Code of Judicial Conduct. Canon 3 requires that all judges perform their judicial duties diligently. In order for public confidence to be maintained, the citizens of this State must be assured that judges are performing their duties impartially and diligently, and that such duties “shall take precedence over all the judge’s other activities.” Canon 3A, Code of Judicial Conduct. Article V, section 13, of the Florida Constitution, also requires that judges shall devote full time to their judicial duties. Our courts are required to “dispose of all judicial matters promptly, efficiently, and fairly.” Canon 3B(8), Code of Judicial Conduct. All judges have a duty to “cooperate with other judges and court officials in the administration of court business.” Canon 3C(1), Code of Judicial Conduct. Each judge is required to “take appropriate action” whenever the judge “receives information or has actual knowledge that another judge has committed a violation of [the] Code.” Canon 3D(1), Code of Judicial Conduct. Chief judges have a special responsibility: “A judge with supervisory authority for the judicial performance of other judges shall take reasonable measures to assure prompt disposition of matters before them and the proper performance of their other judicial responsibilities.” Canon 3C(3), Code of Judicial Conduct.

Under the Rules of Judicial Administration, the chief judge of each circuit is the administrative officer of the courts within that circuit and exercises administrative supervision over all judges and court personnel in that circuit. Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215(b)(2). This includes the authority to “report the neglect of duty by a judge to the Judicial Qualifications Commission or other appropriate person or body, or take such other corrective action as may be appropriate.” Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215(b)(11). The failure of any judge to comply with an administrative order or directive of the chief judge “is considered neglect of duty” and shall be reported by the chief judge to the chief justice of this Court. Fla. R. Jud. Admin. 2.215(h).

In furtherance of our commitment to ensuring that all judges perform their duties faithfully and diligently, the chief judge in each judicial circuit is hereby directed to act as follows:

The chief judge in each circuit shall separately communicate to all trial court judges in that circuit the importance of a professional work ethic and accountability to the judiciary as a full-time commitment under the Code and the Constitution of Florida. This commitment includes the responsibility set forth in Canon 3C(1) requiring that a judge “should cooperate with other judges and court officials in the administration of court business.” Where a judge’s calendar allows, each judge should cooperate with other judges to assure that all cases and matters are handled as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. In addition, each chief judge shall take all administrative actions necessary to monitor the work of each judge of the circuit to ensure that appropriate action is taken in any case where a judge neglects his or her duties.

DONE AND ORDERED at Tallahassee, Florida, on December 1, 2014.

  
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Jorge Labarga, Chief Justice

ATTEST:

  
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John A. Tomasino, Clerk of Court

