

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ARTICLE VI JUDICIAL

Section 18

SEC. 18. (a) A judge is disqualified from acting as a judge, without loss of salary, while there is pending (1) an indictment or an information charging the judge in the United States with a crime punishable as a felony under California or federal law, or (2) a petition to the Supreme Court to review a determination by the Commission on Judicial Performance to remove or retire a judge.

(b) The Commission on Judicial Performance may disqualify a judge from acting as a judge, without loss of salary, upon notice of formal proceedings by the commission charging the judge with judicial misconduct or disability.

(c) The Commission on Judicial Performance shall suspend a judge from office without salary when in the United States the judge pleads guilty or no contest or is found guilty of a crime punishable as a felony under California or federal law or of any other crime that involves moral turpitude under that law. If the conviction is reversed, suspension terminates, and the judge shall be paid the salary for the judicial office held by the judge for the period of suspension. If the judge is suspended and the conviction becomes final, the Commission on Judicial Performance shall remove the judge from office.

(d) Except as provided in subdivision (f), the Commission on Judicial Performance may (1) retire a judge for disability that seriously interferes with the performance of the judge's duties and is or is likely to become permanent, or (2) censure a judge or former judge or remove a judge for action occurring not more than 6 years prior to the commencement of the judge's current term or of the former judge's last term that constitutes willful misconduct in office, persistent failure or inability to perform the judge's duties, habitual intemperance in the use of intoxicants or drugs, or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, or (3) publicly or privately admonish a judge or former judge found to have engaged in an improper action or dereliction of duty. The commission may also bar a former judge who has been censured from receiving an assignment, appointment, or reference of work from any California state court. Upon petition by the judge or former judge, the Supreme Court may, in its discretion, grant review of a determination by the commission to retire, remove, censure, admonish, or disqualify pursuant to subdivision (b) a judge or former judge. When the Supreme Court reviews a determination of the commission, it may make an independent review of the record. If the Supreme Court has not acted within 120 days after granting the petition, the decision of the commission shall be final.

(e) A judge retired by the commission shall be considered to have retired voluntarily. A judge removed by the commission is ineligible for judicial office,

including receiving an assignment, appointment, or reference of work from any California state court, and pending further order of the court is suspended from practicing law in this State. The State Bar may institute appropriate attorney disciplinary proceedings against any judge who retires or resigns from office with judicial disciplinary charges pending.

(f) A determination by the Commission on Judicial Performance to admonish or censure a judge or former judge of the Supreme Court or remove or retire a judge of the Supreme Court shall be reviewed by a tribunal of 7 court of appeal judges selected by lot.

(g) No court, except the Supreme Court, shall have jurisdiction in a civil action or other legal proceeding of any sort brought against the commission by a judge. Any request for injunctive relief or other provisional remedy shall be granted or denied within 90 days of the filing of the request for relief. A failure to comply with the time requirements of this section does not affect the validity of commission proceedings.

(h) Members of the commission, the commission staff, and the examiners and investigators employed by the commission shall be absolutely immune from suit for all conduct at any time in the course of their official duties. No civil action may be maintained against a person, or adverse employment action taken against a person, by any employer, public or private, based on statements presented by the person to the commission.

(i) The Commission on Judicial Performance shall make rules implementing this section, including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The commission shall make rules for the investigation of judges. The commission may provide for the confidentiality of complaints to and investigations by the commission.

(2) The commission shall make rules for formal proceedings against judges when there is cause to believe there is a disability or wrongdoing within the meaning of subdivision (d).

(j) When the commission institutes formal proceedings, the notice of charges, the answer, and all subsequent papers and proceedings shall be open to the public for all formal proceedings instituted after February 28, 1995.

(k) The commission may make explanatory statements.

(l) The budget of the commission shall be separate from the budget of any other state agency or court.

(m) The Supreme Court shall make rules for the conduct of judges, both on and off the bench, and for judicial candidates in the conduct of their campaigns. These rules shall be referred to as the Code of Judicial Ethics.

(Sec. 18 amended Nov. 8, 1994, by Prop. 190. Res.Ch. 111, 1994. Operative March 1, 1995.)