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AUG 16 2021

COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE
OF PENNSYLVANIA

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

IN RE:

Judge Sonya M. McKnight :
Magisterial District Judge :
Magisterial District 12-2-04 : 1 JD 2021
12th Judicial District :
Dauphin County :

**PETITION FOR RELIEF FOR LIFTING OF
INTERIM SUSPENSION WITHOUT PAY**

AND NOW, this 16th day of August, 2021, comes the Judicial Conduct Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Board), by and through undersigned counsel, and files this Petition for Relief for Lifting of Interim Suspension Without Pay pursuant to Rule 701 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, and in support thereof, avers the following:

1. From January 4, 2016, to the present, Respondent has served continuously as a Magisterial District Judge in Magisterial District 12-2-04, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
2. On February 8, 2021, the Board filed a Complaint in the Court of Judicial Discipline charging Respondent with violations of the Rules Governing Standards of Conduct of Magisterial District Judges (RGSCMDJ) and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
3. On that same date, February 8, 2021, the Board filed a Petition for Relief for Interim Suspension Without Pay seeking Respondent's suspension based upon the following factual averments:

- a. On December 16, 2020, the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG) charged Respondent with Tampering with Evidence, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4910, Obstructing Administration of Law, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5101 and Official Oppression, 18 Pa.C.S.A. §5301, all second degree misdemeanor offenses.
 - b. The Criminal Complaint alleged that Respondent took advantage of her position as a judge while at the scene of her son's traffic stop on February 22, 2020, thereby allowing her to "move freely about the scene of the traffic stop because of her position as a Magisterial District Judge."
4. By order dated February 9, 2021, the Honorable Court suspended Respondent without pay.
5. Following a Preliminary Hearing on February 19, 2021, the aforementioned criminal charges against Respondent were bound over to the Court of Common Pleas of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania.
6. On July 26, 2021, a jury was chosen and Respondent's criminal trial commenced.
7. On July 27, 2021, the prosecution rested its case and, on motion of the defendant, a judgment of acquittal on all three counts then pending against Respondent was granted.
8. The July 27, 2021 judgment of acquittal constituted a final disposition of the criminal charges against Respondent thereby eliminating the basis of the Board's request for the interim suspension of Respondent.


WHEREFORE, it is respectfully requested that this Honorable Court enter an order lifting its interim suspension order against Respondent.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD W. LONG
Chief Counsel

DATE: August 16, 2021

By:



MELISSA L. NORTON
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

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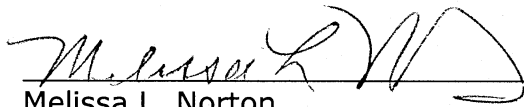
VERIFICATION

I, Melisa L. Norton, verify that the statements in this Petition for Lifting of Interim Suspension Without Pay are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: August 16, 2021

BY:



Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
(717) 234-7911

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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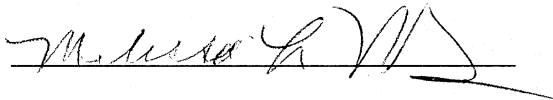
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Dauphin County :

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the Case Records Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania

Signature:



Name:

Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel

Attorney No.:

46684

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE**

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PROOF OF SERVICE

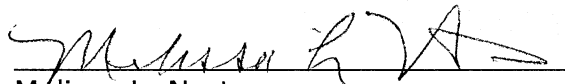
In compliance with Rule 122 of the Court of Judicial Discipline Rules of Procedure, on the date below a copy of the Board's Petition for Lifting of Interim Suspension Without Pay was sent by certified mail and electronic mail to Brian McMonagle, Esquire attorney for District Judge Sonya McKnight address:

Brian McMonagle, Esquire
McMonagle Perri McHugh Mischak and Davis
1845 Walnut St 19th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Email: bmcmonagle@mpmpc.com

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: August 16, 2021

BY:



Melissa L. Norton
Deputy Counsel
Pa. Supreme Court ID No. 46684
Judicial Conduct Board
Pennsylvania Judicial Center
601 Commonwealth Avenue, Suite 3500
P.O. Box 62525
Harrisburg, PA 17106
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