

JAN 29 2026

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
COURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINECOURT OF JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE
OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE: : DOCKET NO. 1 JD 2026

AMY L. ZANELLI :
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT JUDGE :
MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT COURT 31-1-06 :
LEHIGH COUNTY :PETITION OF THE RESPONDENT, THE HONORABLE AMY L. ZANELLI, TO BE
PLACED IN THE DIVERSIONARY PROGRAM

The Respondent, the Honorable Amy L. Zanelli, by her counsel, Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire, respectfully requests to be placed in a diversionary program pursuant to the case of In Re Domitrovich 150 A.3d 592 (Pa. Court of Judicial Discipline, 2016) for the following reasons:

1) Judge Zanelli is currently serving her first term as a District Judge in Allentown in Magisterial District Court 31-1-

06. She was elected to a full term in that position and sworn in January 2021. She will run for re-election in 2027, and if elected would begin her second term in January of 2028.

2) Prior to her being elected as a Magisterial District Judge, she was elected to the County Commissioners of Lehigh County as a Democrat, and then served as Chairman of the County Commissioners of Lehigh County.

3) While as a Judge, Judge Zanelli has had some issues which resulted in the captioned Complaint.

4) Mr. Stretton, on her behalf, had worked with the Judicial Conduct Board, and pursuant to Judicial Conduct Board Rule 38, had Judge Zanelli evaluated by psychiatrist, Dr. Barbara Ziv, appointed by the Judicial Conduct Board. In this matter, Dr. Ziv recommended certain issues be addressed in the course of treatment for Judge Zanelli. Dr. Ziv's report is confidential, and will be produced at a hearing on this request for a diversionary program and then asked her report be kept under seal.

5) As a result of Dr. Ziv's report, Mr. Stretton then, on behalf of Judge Zanelli, retained psychologist, Dr. Steven Samuel. Dr. Steven Samuel began a course for treatment with Judge Zanelli to address the issues raised in Dr. Ziv's report. Judge Zanelli has participated fully in the treatment by Dr. Samuel and Dr. Samuel has prepared an initial report reflecting her excellent progress in the treatment program, which also addressed the issues raised by the appointed psychiatrist, Dr. Ziv. Dr. Samuel is preparing an updated report. Both reports will be presented under seal to the Court of Judicial Discipline during a hearing.

6) This treatment has been going on for a number of months. Mr. Stretton had asked the Judicial Conduct Board to allow the present conduct to be dismissed pursuant to Judicial Conduct Board Rule 38.

7) The Judicial Conduct Board, through their Deputy Chief Counsel, James Kleman, Jr., Esquire, advised Mr. Stretton that the Judicial Conduct Board requested Mr. Stretton raise the issue with the Court of Judicial Discipline since the Judicial Conduct Board filed the Complaint.

8) Now, the Complaint in discipline has been filed, Mr. Stretton is seeking to have Judge Zanelli placed in a diversionary program by the Court of Judicial Discipline. Judge Zanelli is willing to continue her treatment with Dr. Samuel to address the issues raised by Dr. Ziv. At a hearing, Mr. Stretton will present the updated reports of Dr. Samuel and his testimony.

9) Mr. Stretton's request for this diversionary program pursuant to the procedure established in the case of In Re Domitrovich 150 A.3d 592 (Pa. Court of Judicial Discipline, 2016). In that case, Judge Domitrovich, who had a distinguished background, was charged with some ex parte communications, among other matters, and a Complaint for discipline was filed. Her counsel at the time requested that Judge Domitrovich be allowed to participate in the Judicial Diversionary Program/Interim Policy Statement, which is docketed at 1 JD 1994.

10) Judge Domitrovich entered that program and completed it, and then was allowed to return to the bench where she continued to serve in an excellent fashion in Erie County.

11) In looking at the Rules of Procedure for the Court of Judicial Discipline, there are mental health and physical disability procedures under Rule 601. Those procedures are not really diversionary programs since they involve when a Judge is unable to defend themselves due to mental illness, and that is not the issue with Judge Zanelli.

12) Unfortunately, there is nowhere published the Order utilizing in the aforementioned Domitrovich case. The Order is cited at 1 JD 1994. The case of Domitrovich in essence created this diversionary program.

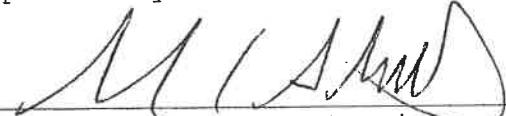
13) Mr. Stretton respectfully requests that this Honorable Court allow him a hearing on this issue so he can present the psychological reports and the testimony of Dr. Samuel and Dr. Samuel's reports and the report of psychiatrist Dr. Ziv. Mr. Stretton would ask that they be presented to the Court under seal and privately.

14) Mr. Stretton, therefore, is requesting a full and complete hearing before the Court of Judicial Discipline due to the case law established by the aforementioned Domitrovich case so that Judge Zanelli can be placed in the judicial diversionary program and continue her treatment with Dr. Samuel if this Honorable Court approves that and ultimately have all charges dismissed if she successfully completes her treatment program.

15) Although the diversionary program normally requires the consent of the Judicial Conduct Board, Mr. Stretton believes that that will be forthcoming, though it has not been given yet, because he worked for the last year with James Kleman, Jr., Esquire on the Judicial Conduct Board's diversionary program, and then was told at the end to petition to Court on this issue. Judge Zanelli would appear to be a prime candidate for the diversionary program and is doing very well in her treatment with Dr. Samuel.

WHEREFORE, Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire, on behalf of the Respondent, the Honorable Amy L. Zanelli, respectfully requests this Honorable Court hold a hearing and place Judge Zanelli in the diversionary program similar to that utilized in the aforementioned Domitrovich case so that she be allowed to complete the program through her treatments with Dr. Samuel, who will provide regular reports to this Honorable Court.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I, Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire, certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Respectfully submitted,

1/28/26

Date



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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify I am this date serving a copy of the foregoing Petition in the captioned matter upon the following persons in the manner indicated below.

Service by electronic mail addressed as follows:

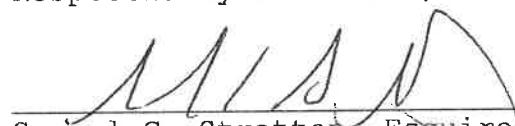
1. The Honorable John A. Hipple
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Respectfully submitted,

1/28/26

Date


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