

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE
TENTH CIRCUIT**

IN RE: CHARGE OF JUDICIAL
MISCONDUCT

Nos. 10-10-90026 & 10-10-90027

Before **BRISCOE**, Chief Judge.

ORDER

Complainant has filed a complaint of judicial misconduct against a district judge and a magistrate judge in this circuit. My consideration of this complaint is governed by 1) the misconduct rules issued by the Judicial Conference of the United States, entitled *Rules for Judicial-Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings* (the “Misconduct Rules”); 2) the federal statute dealing with judicial misconduct, 28 U.S.C. § 351 *et seq.*, and 3) the “Breyer Report,” a study by the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act Study Committee, headed by Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, entitled *Implementation of the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act of 1980*. The Breyer Report may be found at: <http://www.supremecourt.gov/publicinfo/breyercommitteereport.pdf>. To the extent that there are any relevant prior decisions of the full Judicial Council of this circuit which are consistent with those authorities, they may also govern my consideration of this complaint.

Complainant has been provided with a copy of the Misconduct Rules, and the Rules are also accessible on the Tenth Circuit’s web page at:

<http://www.ca10.uscourts.gov/misconduct.php>. In accord with those rules, the names of the complainant and subject judges shall not be disclosed in this order. *See* Misconduct Rule 11(g)(2).

Complainant contends that the subject judges are biased against complainant because they ruled against complainant in an underlying civil rights case. The issues in the underlying case arise out of complainant's efforts to secure kosher meals in prison, and complainant now contends the court's negative rulings demonstrate that the judges hold anti-Semitic beliefs. To the extent that complainant challenges the rulings themselves, these claims are not cognizable as misconduct because they are "directly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling." Misconduct Rule 11(c)(1)(B). As explained in the Breyer Report, this exclusion of matters related to the merits of underlying cases protects the independence of the judges deciding those cases. *See* Breyer Report, App. E., ¶ 2.

However, allegations of bias can form the basis for a valid claim for misconduct even when the allegations relate to a judge's ruling, *see* Commentary to Misconduct Rule 3. Nonetheless, this bias claim fails because it finds no support outside of the judges' rulings. The Misconduct Rules require complainants to support their allegations with "sufficient evidence to raise an inference that misconduct has occurred." *See* Misconduct Rule 11(c)(1)(D).

Negative rulings alone – even rulings on religious issues – do not, by themselves, support a claim of bias.

Accordingly, this complaint is dismissed pursuant to Misconduct Rule 11(c). The Circuit Executive is directed to transmit this order to complainant and copies to the subject judges and the Judicial Conference Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability. *See* Misconduct Rule 11(g)(2). To seek review of this order, complainant must file a petition for review by the Judicial Council. The requirements for filing a petition for review are set out in Misconduct Rule 18(b). The petition must be filed with the Office of the Circuit Executive within 35 days of the date of the letter transmitting this order. *Id.*

So ordered this 30th day of September, 2010.

/s/ Mary Beck Briscoe

Honorable Mary Beck Briscoe
Chief Circuit Judge