

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF THE
TENTH CIRCUIT**

IN RE: COMPLAINT UNDER THE
JUDICIAL CONDUCT AND
DISABILITY ACT

No. 10-14-90016

Before **BRISCOE**, Chief Judge.

ORDER

Complainant has filed a complaint of judicial misconduct against a district 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 “JCD 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.

The JCD Rules and this circuit’s local misconduct rules are available to complainants on the Tenth Circuit’s web page at: <http://www.ca10.uscourts.gov>

/ce/misconduct. Paper copies are also furnished by the Circuit Executive's Office upon request. In accord with those rules, the names of the complainant and subject judge shall not be disclosed in this order. *See* JCD Rule 11(g)(2).

The initial complaint in this matter alleged that the subject judge made comments during proceedings in an underlying case that indicated bias. The allegations were specific enough to trigger a limited inquiry to complainant under JCD Rule 12(b), asking for more specific information in order to investigate the claims. In response, claimant sent copies of transcript pages from the underlying proceedings and argued that the court's rulings were contrary to the record. Arguments challenging a judge's rulings are not cognizable as misconduct because they are "directly related to the merits of a decision or procedural ruling." JCD 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.

While allegations of bias can state a valid claim for misconduct even when related to a judge's ruling, *see* Commentary to JCD Rule 3, nothing in complainant's response supports the claims of bias. The Rules require complainants to support their allegations with "sufficient evidence to raise an inference that misconduct has occurred." *See* JCD Rule 11(c)(1)(D).

Accordingly, this complaint is dismissed pursuant to JCD Rule 11(c). The Circuit Executive is directed to transmit this order to complainant and copies to

the subject judge and the Judicial Conference Committee on Judicial Conduct and Disability. *See* JCD 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 JCD 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 9th day of May, 2014.

/s/ Mary Beck Briscoe

Honorable Mary Beck Briscoe
Chief Circuit Judge