



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION  
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

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**CJC No. 20-0186**

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**PUBLIC WARNING**

**HONORABLE CIRO RODRIGUEZ  
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 1, PLACE 2  
SAN ANTONIO, BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on December 2-3, 2020, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations in this matter against the Honorable Ciro Rodriguez, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Place 2, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.<sup>1</sup> Judge Rodriguez was advised by letters of the Commission’s concerns and provided written responses.

**BACKGROUND**

Judge Rodriguez’s daughter, Xochil Pena Rodriguez (“Ms. Pena Rodriguez”), was a candidate in the 2020 Democratic primary to represent District 19 in the Texas Senate.<sup>2</sup> During the 2020 election season Judge Rodriguez engaged in numerous activities in support of Ms. Pena Rodriguez’s campaign, including distributing campaign literature at public events and making public statements promoting her candidacy. Specifically, on September 28, 2019, Judge Rodriguez introduced Ms. Pena Rodriguez at a meeting of the Tejano Democrats, during which he expressed his support for her campaign and promoted her candidacy. Judge Rodriguez told those in attendance he had already travelled to several counties to campaign with Ms. Pena Rodriguez and would continue to campaign with her throughout all 17 counties in the District. A video recording of Judge Rodriguez’s statements was disseminated by local media outlets.

Judge Rodriguez attended a 2019 Labor Day Picnic hosted by the Northeast Bexar County Democrats at which he distributed Ms. Pena Rodriguez’s campaign materials and spoke to attendees in support of her candidacy. On October 1, 2019, Judge Rodriguez attended a “National Night Out” event

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<sup>1</sup> Before assuming the bench, Judge Rodriguez served in the Texas House of Representatives from 1987 to 1997 and served as a U.S. Representative for Texas’ 28<sup>th</sup> Congressional District from 1997-2005, and for Texas’ 23<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District from 2007 to 2011.

<sup>2</sup> In July of 2020, Ms. Pena Rodriguez lost the Democratic primary runoff election to Roland Gutierrez.

hosted by his brother, Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez, in his capacity as the Bexar County Commissioner for Precinct 1, during which the judge passed out materials supporting Ms. Pena Rodriguez’s campaign and promoted her candidacy to those in attendance. Photographs of Judge Rodriguez engaging in these activities appeared in reports by local media outlets.

Judge Rodriguez timely responded to the Commission’s inquiries regarding this matter and acknowledged engaging in numerous activities in support of Ms. Pena Rodriguez’s campaign, including those described above.

After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following Findings and Conclusion:

### **FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Ciro Rodriguez was the Justice of the Peace for Precinct 1, Place 2, in San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.
2. Judge Rodriguez’s daughter, Ms. Pena Rodriguez, was a candidate in the 2020 Democratic primary election to represent District 19 in the Texas Senate.
3. Judge Rodriguez publicly campaigned for Ms. Pena Rodriguez at a 2019 Labor Day Picnic by distributing her campaign materials and promoting her candidacy to those in attendance.
4. On September 28, 2019, Judge Rodriguez introduced Ms. Pena Rodriguez at a 2019 meeting of the Tejano Democrats during which he publicly expressed his support for her campaign and promoted her candidacy.
5. On October 1, 2019, Judge Rodriguez publicly campaigned for Ms. Pena Rodriguez at a 2019 “National Night Out” event by distributing her campaign materials and promoting her candidacy to those in attendance.

### **RELEVANT STANDARDS**


1. Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides in relevant part, “A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others . . .”
2. Canon 5(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides: “A judge or judicial candidate shall not authorize the public use of his or her name endorsing another candidate for any public office, except that either may indicate support for a political party.”

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined the Honorable Ciro Rodriguez, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Place 2, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas, should be publicly warned for engaging in activities supporting his daughter’s campaign for public office, including distributing campaign materials and promoting her candidacy at public events and making public statements in support of her campaign, which created the appearance Judge Rodriguez was using the prestige of his judicial office to advance his daughter’s private interests, in violation of Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, and that he endorsed her candidacy, in violation of Canon 5(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, §1-a of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to protect the public and promote public confidence in the judicial system.

Issued this the 25<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2021.

  
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David Hall  
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct