# First Regular Session Seventy-fourth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

# REENGROSSED

This Version Includes All Amendments Adopted in the House of Introduction HCR23-1001

LLS NO. R23-0150.01 Conrad Imel x2313

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# **HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 23-1001**

101	SUBMITTING TO THE REGISTERED ELECTORS OF THE STATE OF
102	COLORADO AN AMENDMENT TO THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION
103	CONCERNING JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE, AND, IN CONNECTION
104	THEREWITH, ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL
105	DISCIPLINE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, SETTING STANDARDS FOR
106	JUDICIAL REVIEW OF A DISCIPLINE CASE, AND CLARIFYING WHEN
107	DISCIPLINE PROCEEDINGS BECOME PUBLIC.

### **Resolution Summary**

(Note: This summary applies to this resolution as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this resolution passes third reading in the house of introduction, a resolution summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this resolution will be available at <u>http://leg.colorado.gov/</u>.)

HOUSE 3rd Reading Unamended April 6, 2023

> Amended 2nd Reading April 5, 2023

HOUSE

Legislative Interim Committee on Judicial Discipline. The concurrent resolution amends section 23 of article VI of the Colorado constitution as it relates to judicial discipline. Under existing law, the commission on judicial discipline (commission) investigates complaints of judicial misconduct; conducts formal judicial disciplinary proceedings; and may dismiss complaints, impose informal sanctions, or recommend that the Colorado supreme court impose formal sanctions. The commission may also request that the supreme court appoint special masters to hear and take evidence on a matter and report to the commission.

The resolution clarifies the commission's authority to dismiss complaints. The resolution repeals the authority of the commission to conduct formal judicial disciplinary proceedings and request appointment of special masters, and creates an independent adjudicative board (board) to conduct formal proceedings and hear appeals of the commission's orders imposing informal sanctions. The board is comprised of 4 district court judges, 4 attorneys, and 4 citizens. The resolution prohibits a member of the commission from being appointed to the board and prohibits a member of the board from being appointed to the commission. A randomly selected panel of the board, comprised of one judge, one attorney, and one citizen, conducts formal proceedings in a case. The resolution permits the panel to dismiss a complaint, impose informal sanctions, or impose formal sanctions.

The resolution sets the standards of review to be used by the supreme court when it reviews a panel's decision. The resolution requires a tribunal of 7 randomly selected court of appeals judges to review the panel's decision in the same manner and using the same standards of review when: The proceedings involve a complaint against a Colorado supreme court justice; a Colorado supreme court justice, a staff member to a justice, or a family member of a justice is a complainant or a material witness in the proceeding; or more than 2 justices have recused themselves from the proceeding. The tribunal reviews the panel's decision in the same manner and using the same standards of review as the supreme court does when it reviews panel decisions.

Under existing law, commission proceedings are confidential until the commission files recommendations with the supreme court. The resolution makes proceedings public at the commencement of formal proceedings and clarifies that appeals to the board of informal remedial sanctions are confidential. The resolution clarifies that a person is absolutely immune from any action for defamation based on papers filed with or testimony before the commission, adjudicative board, supreme court, or tribunal. The resolution clarifies the circumstances in which the commission may release otherwise confidential information.

The resolution creates a rule-making committee to propose rules

for the commission. The supreme court approves or rejects each rule proposed by the rule-making committee. The Colorado rules of evidence and Colorado rules of civil procedure, as amended, apply to proceedings before a panel of the adjudicative board until and unless the supreme court promulgates rules specifically governing panel proceedings.

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the
 Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate
 concurring herein:

4 **SECTION 1.** At the election held on November 5, 2024, the 5 secretary of state shall submit to the registered electors of the state the 6 ballot title set forth in section 2 for the following amendment to the state 7 constitution:

8 In the constitution of the state of Colorado, section 23 of article 9 VI, **amend** (3)(a), (3)(e), (3)(f), (3)(g), and (3)(h); and **add** (3)(c.5) and 10 (3)(k) as follows:

Section 23. Retirement and removal of justices and judges. 11 12 (3) (a) There shall be a commission on judicial discipline. It shall consist 13 of: Two judges of district courts and two judges of county courts, each 14 selected by the supreme court; two citizens admitted to practice law in the 15 courts of this state, neither of whom shall be a justice or judge, who shall 16 have practiced in this state for at least ten years and who shall be 17 appointed by the governor, with the consent of the senate; and four 18 citizens, none of whom shall be a justice or judge, active or retired, nor 19 admitted to practice law in the courts of this state, who shall be appointed 20 by the governor, with the consent of the senate. AN APPOINTING 21 AUTHORITY SHALL NOT APPOINT A MEMBER OF THE INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL 22 DISCIPLINE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD ESTABLISHED IN SUBSECTION (3)(c.5) OF 23 THIS SECTION TO THE COMMISSION.

1 (c.5) (I) THERE IS CREATED THE INDEPENDENT JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE 2 ADJUDICATIVE BOARD AS AN INDEPENDENT AGENCY WITHIN THE JUDICIAL 3 DEPARTMENT. THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD SHALL CONDUCT FORMAL 4 JUDICIAL DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS. THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD ALSO 5 SHALL HEAR APPEALS OF THE COMMISSION'S ORDERS OF INFORMAL 6 REMEDIAL ACTION. APPEALS TO THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD ARE 7 CONFIDENTIAL. THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD CONSISTS OF FOUR DISTRICT 8 COURT JUDGES WITHOUT ANY JUDICIAL OR ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY 9 HISTORY, APPOINTED BY THE SUPREME COURT; FOUR ATTORNEYS WITHOUT 10 ANY JUDICIAL OR ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY HISTORY WHO ARE LICENSED 11 TO PRACTICE LAW IN COLORADO AND WHO RESIDE IN COLORADO, 12 APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR AND CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE; AND 13 FOUR CITIZENS WHO ARE NOT JUDGES OR ATTORNEYS LICENSED TO 14 PRACTICE LAW IN COLORADO, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR AND 15 CONFIRMED BY THE SENATE. AN APPOINTING AUTHORITY SHALL NOT 16 APPOINT A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION TO THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD. 17 FOR THE PURPOSE OF STAGGERING TERMS, WHEN MAKING THE INITIAL 18 APPOINTMENTS TO THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, THE APPOINTING 19 AUTHORITY SHALL DESIGNATE TWO MEMBERS FROM EACH CATEGORY TO 20 A FIVE-YEAR TERM AND TWO MEMBERS FROM EACH CATEGORY TO A 21 THREE-YEAR TERM. ALL SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENTS ARE FOR A TERM OF 22 FIVE YEARS; EXCEPT THAT IN THE EVENT OF A VACANCY ON THE 23 ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, THE ORIGINAL APPOINTING AUTHORITY SHALL 24 APPOINT, IN THE SAME MANNER AS AN ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT, A 25 REPLACEMENT TO SERVE THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM.

26 (II) UPON ORDER OF A FORMAL HEARING PURSUANT TO 27 SUBSECTION (3)(e) OF THIS SECTION, A PANEL OF THE ADJUDICATIVE

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BOARD SHALL CONVENE TO CONDUCT THE HEARING. A PANEL CONSISTS OF
 ONE JUDGE, ONE ATTORNEY LICENSED TO PRACTICE LAW IN COLORADO,
 AND ONE CITIZEN. THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR, OR THE
 ADMINISTRATOR'S DESIGNEE, SHALL RANDOMLY SELECT THE PANEL FROM
 AMONG THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD'S MEMBERSHIP. THE RANDOM
 SELECTION OF A PANEL IS A PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION.

7 (e) (I) The commission may, after such investigation as it deems 8 necessary, DISMISS A COMPLAINT, order informal remedial action, OR 9 order a formal hearing to be held before it A PANEL OF THE ADJUDICATIVE 10 BOARD concerning the removal, retirement, suspension, censure, 11 reprimand, or other discipline of a justice or a judge. or request the 12 supreme court to appoint three special masters, who shall be justices or 13 judges of courts of record, to hear and take evidence in any such matter 14 and to report thereon to the commission. THE RESPONDENT JUSTICE OR 15 JUDGE MAY APPEAL THE COMMISSION'S ORDER FOR INFORMAL REMEDIAL 16 ACTION TO A PANEL OF THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD. THE ADJUDICATIVE 17 PANEL SHALL REVIEW THE COMMISSION'S INFORMAL REMEDIAL ACTION 18 ORDER FOR ABUSE OF DISCRETION. AN APPEAL OF AN INFORMAL REMEDIAL 19 ACTION ORDER IS CONFIDENTIAL CONSISTENT WITH SUBSECTION (3)(g) OF 20 THIS SECTION.

(II) After a formal hearing, or after considering the record and
report of the masters, if the commission finds good cause therefor, it THE
ADJUDICATIVE PANEL may DISMISS THE CHARGES BEFORE IT; take informal
remedial action; or it may recommend to the supreme court ORDER the
removal, retirement, suspension, censure, reprimand, or OTHER discipline,
as the case may be, of the justice or judge. The commission
ADJUDICATIVE PANEL may also recommend ORDER that the costs of its

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1 THE investigation and hearing be assessed against such justice or judge. 2 THE JUSTICE OR JUDGE MAY APPEAL AN ADJUDICATIVE PANEL'S 3 DISCIPLINARY ORDER, AND THE COMMISSION MAY APPEAL AN 4 ADJUDICATIVE PANEL'S DISMISSAL OR DISCIPLINARY ORDER, TO THE 5 SUPREME COURT OR, WHEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED IN 6 SUBSECTION (3)(f)(II) OF THIS SECTION ARE PRESENT, TO THE TRIBUNAL 7 DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(f)(II) OF THIS SECTION.

8 Following receipt of a recommendation from the (f) (I) 9 commission, the supreme court shall review the record of the proceedings 10 on the law and facts and in its discretion may permit the introduction of 11 additional evidence and shall order ON APPEAL OF AN ADJUDICATIVE 12 PANEL'S ORDER FOR removal, retirement, suspension, censure, reprimand, 13 or OTHER discipline, as it finds just and proper, or wholly reject the 14 recommendation OR A PANEL'S DISMISSAL OF CHARGES, THE SUPREME 15 COURT, OR THE TRIBUNAL DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(f)(II) OF THIS 16 SECTION IF THE TRIBUNAL IS HEARING THE APPEAL, SHALL REVIEW THE 17 RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS ON THE LAW AND FACTS. WHEN REVIEWING 18 THE ADJUDICATIVE PANEL'S DECISION, THE SUPREME COURT SHALL REVIEW 19 MATTERS OF LAW DE NOVO, REVIEW FACTUAL MATTERS TO DETERMINE 20 WHETHER THE ADJUDICATIVE PANEL'S DETERMINATION IS CLEARLY 21 ERRONEOUS, AND REVIEW ANY SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY THE ADJUDICATIVE 22 PANEL FOR ABUSE OF DISCRETION. Upon an order for retirement, the 23 justice or judge shall thereby be retired with the same rights and 24 privileges as if he retired pursuant to statute. Upon an order for removal, 25 the justice or judge shall thereby be removed from office, and his salary 26 shall cease from the date of such order. On the entry of an order for 27 retirement or for removal of a judge, his office shall be deemed vacant.

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1 (II) IN PROCEEDINGS IN WHICH THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED IN 2 THIS SUBSECTION (3)(f)(II) ARE PRESENT, A TRIBUNAL COMPRISED OF 3 SEVEN JUDGES OF THE COURT OF APPEALS AND DISTRICT COURT SHALL 4 REVIEW THE DECISION OF THE ADJUDICATIVE PANEL OR HEAR ANY OTHER 5 APPEAL IN THE SAME MANNER AND USE THE SAME STANDARDS OF REVIEW 6 AS THE SUPREME COURT WHEN IT REVIEWS DECISIONS AND HEARS APPEALS 7 AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3)(f)(I) OF THIS SECTION. THE STATE 8 COURT ADMINISTRATOR, OR THE ADMINISTRATOR'S DESIGNEE, SHALL 9 RANDOMLY SELECT MEMBERS OF THE TRIBUNAL FROM AMONG ALL 10 DISTRICT JUDGES AND COURT OF APPEALS JUDGES WHO DO NOT HAVE A 11 CURRENT DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION OR PROCEEDING PENDING BEFORE 12 THE COMMISSION OR ADJUDICATIVE BOARD; HAVE NOT RECEIVED A 13 DISCIPLINARY SANCTION FROM THE COMMISSION, ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, 14 OR SUPREME COURT; AND ARE NOT OTHERWISE REQUIRED BY LAW, COURT 15 RULE, OR JUDICIAL CANON TO RECUSE THEMSELVES FROM THE TRIBUNAL. 16 A TRIBUNAL MUST NOT INCLUDE MORE THAN ONE MEMBER WHO IS A 17 COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE AND NOT MORE THAN ONE DISTRICT JUDGE 18 FROM ANY ONE JUDICIAL DISTRICT. THE RANDOM SELECTION OF TRIBUNAL 19 MEMBERS IS A PURELY ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTION. THE TRIBUNAL SHALL 20 REVIEW DECISIONS AND HEAR ANY OTHER APPEALS IN THE FOLLOWING 21 CIRCUMSTANCES: 22 (A) WHEN THE PROCEEDINGS INVOLVE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A 23 COLORADO SUPREME COURT JUSTICE;

24 (B) WHEN A COLORADO SUPREME COURT JUSTICE IS A
25 COMPLAINANT OR A MATERIAL WITNESS IN THE PROCEEDING;

26 (C) WHEN A STAFF MEMBER TO A COLORADO SUPREME COURT
27 JUSTICE IS A COMPLAINANT OR MATERIAL WITNESS IN THE PROCEEDING;

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(D) WHEN A FAMILY MEMBER OF A COLORADO SUPREME COURT
 JUSTICE IS A COMPLAINANT OR MATERIAL WITNESS IN THE PROCEEDING; OR
 (E) WHEN ANY OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES EXIST DUE TO WHICH
 MORE THAN TWO COLORADO SUPREME COURT JUSTICES HAVE RECUSED
 THEMSELVES FROM THE PROCEEDING.

6 (III) UPON A DETERMINATION THAT A SANCTION IMPOSED BY THE
7 ADJUDICATIVE PANEL IS AN ABUSE OF DISCRETION, THE SUPREME COURT
8 OR, IF APPLICABLE, THE TRIBUNAL, SHALL REMAND THE PROCEEDINGS TO
9 THE PANEL THAT IMPOSED THE SANCTION WITH DIRECTIONS THE COURT OR
10 TRIBUNAL DEEMS NECESSARY.

(IV) UPON AN ORDER FOR RETIREMENT, THE JUSTICE OR JUDGE IS
RETIRED WITH THE SAME RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES AS IF THE JUSTICE OR
JUDGE RETIRED PURSUANT TO STATUTE. UPON AN ORDER FOR REMOVAL,
THE JUSTICE OR JUDGE IS REMOVED FROM OFFICE AND THE JUSTICE'S OR
JUDGE'S SALARY CEASES FROM THE DATE OF THE ORDER. ON THE ENTRY
OF AN ORDER FOR RETIREMENT OR FOR REMOVAL OF A JUSTICE OR JUDGE,
THE JUSTICE'S OR JUDGE'S OFFICE IS DEEMED VACANT.

18 (g) (I) Prior to the filing of a recommendation to the supreme 19 court by the commission COMMENCEMENT OF FORMAL DISCIPLINARY 20 PROCEEDINGS against any justice or judge, all papers filed with and 21 proceedings before the commission on judicial discipline or masters 22 appointed by the supreme court, pursuant to this subsection (3), shall be 23 ARE confidential, and the filing of papers with and the giving of testimony 24 before the commission or the masters shall be privileged; but no other 25 publication of such papers or proceedings shall be privileged in any 26 action for defamation; except that the record filed by the commission in 27 the supreme court continues privileged IS CONFIDENTIAL. A PERSON IS

ABSOLUTELY IMMUNE FROM ANY ACTION FOR DEFAMATION BASED ON
PAPERS FILED WITH OR TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COMMISSION, THE
ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, THE SUPREME COURT, OR THE TRIBUNAL, BUT NO
OTHER PUBLICATION OF THE PAPERS OR PROCEEDINGS HAS ABSOLUTE
IMMUNITY IN ANY ACTION FOR DEFAMATION and a writing which THAT
was privileged prior to its filing with the commission or the masters does
not lose such privilege by such filing.

8 (II) NOTWITHSTANDING THE CONFIDENTIALITY REQUIREMENT
9 DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3)(g), THE COMMISSION MAY:

10 (A) RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF AN
11 EVALUATION, INVESTIGATION, OR PROCEEDING TO THE VICTIM OF
12 MISCONDUCT OR THE COMPLAINANT;

13 (B) RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT A COMPLAINT THAT RESULTED 14 IN INFORMAL REMEDIAL ACTION OR PUBLIC DISCIPLINE OF A JUDGE OR 15 JUSTICE TO THE STATE COURT ADMINISTRATOR AS NECESSARY FOR THE 16 SELECTION OF A TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(f)(II) OF THIS 17 SECTION; ANY RELEVANT COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE OR 18 JUDICIAL NOMINATING COMMISSION, THE OFFICE OF ATTORNEY 19 REGULATION COUNSEL, AND THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDING DISCIPLINARY 20 JUDGE, OR SUCCESSORS TO EACH COMMISSION OR OFFICE; THE OFFICE OF 21 THE GOVERNOR, FOR THE PURPOSE OF JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS; THE 22 JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING APPLICANTS FOR 23 THE SENIOR JUDGE PROGRAM AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE ADJUDICATIVE 24 BOARD PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(c.5)(I) OF THIS SECTION; AND OTHER 25 LIMITED RECIPIENTS CONSISTENT WITH THE PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION 26 ALLOWED BY RULE; AND

27 (C) MAKE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE AGGREGATE INFORMATION ABOUT

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TRENDS OR PATTERNS IN COMPLAINTS MADE TO THE COMMISSION, BUT THE
 COMMISSION SHALL NOT MAKE PUBLIC ANY INFORMATION THAT IDENTIFIES
 ANY SPECIFIC PERSON OR COMPLAINT.

4 (III) A RECIPIENT OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION PURSUANT TO
5 SUBSECTION (3)(g)(II)(B) OF THIS SECTION SHALL PRESERVE THE
6 CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION SUBJECT TO ANY SANCTIONS FOR
7 VIOLATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY AS MAY BE PROVIDED BY LAW.

8 (IV) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY PROVIDE BY LAW FOR
9 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING AND COMPLAINANT RIGHTS CONSISTENT WITH
10 SUBSECTION (3)(g)(II) OF THIS SECTION.

(h) The supreme court shall by rule provide for procedures before
the commission on judicial discipline, the masters, and the supreme court.
The rules shall also provide the standards and degree of proof to be
applied by the commission in its proceedings. A justice or judge who is
a member of the commission COMMISSION, ADJUDICATIVE BOARD,
TRIBUNAL, or supreme court shall not participate in any proceedings
involving his THE JUSTICE'S OR JUDGE'S own removal or retirement.

18 (k) (I) THERE IS CREATED A RULE-MAKING COMMITTEE TO ADOPT 19 RULES FOR THE JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE PROCESS. THE RULE-MAKING 20 COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF THREE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE SUPREME 21 COURT, FIVE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD, AND 22 FIVE MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE COMMISSION. MEMBERS SERVE AT THE 23 PLEASURE OF THEIR APPOINTING AUTHORITY. THE RULE-MAKING 24 COMMITTEE SHALL ELECT A CHAIR WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE 25 AND COMMISSION. THE RULES MUST INCLUDE THE STANDARDS AND 26 DEGREE OF PROOF TO BE APPLIED IN JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE PROCEEDINGS; 27 CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING PROCEDURES; AND COMPLAINANT RIGHTS DURING THE EVALUATION, INVESTIGATION, AND HEARING PROCESS. THE
 GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY PROVIDE BY LAW FOR CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING
 AND COMPLAINANT RIGHTS.

4 (II) THE RULE-MAKING COMMITTEE MAY PROMULGATE SPECIFIC 5 RULES GOVERNING PROCEEDINGS BEFORE A PANEL OF THE ADJUDICATIVE 6 BOARD. THE COLORADO RULES OF EVIDENCE AND COLORADO RULES OF 7 CIVIL PROCEDURE, AS AMENDED, APPLY TO PROCEEDINGS BEFORE A PANEL 8 OF THE ADJUDICATIVE BOARD UNTIL AND UNLESS THE RULE-MAKING 9 COMMITTEE PROMULGATES RULES GOVERNING PANEL PROCEEDINGS. 10 RULES PROMULGATED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (3)(k)(II) APPLY TO 11 FORMAL PROCEEDINGS INITIATED ON OR AFTER APRIL 1, 2025.

SECTION 2. Each elector voting at the election may cast a vote either "Yes/For" or "No/Against" on the following ballot title: "Shall there be an amendment to the Colorado constitution concerning judicial discipline, and, in connection therewith, establishing an independent judicial discipline adjudicative board, setting standards for judicial review of a discipline case, and clarifying when discipline proceedings become public?"

SECTION 3. Except as otherwise provided in section 1-40-123,
Colorado Revised Statutes, if at least fifty-five percent of the electors
voting on the ballot title vote "Yes/For", then the amendment will become
part of the state constitution.