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June 9, 2026

United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit
Attn: Spencer Hallett, Circuit Executive
Room 5509
E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse
333 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: Complaint of Judicial Misconduct—Judge Christopher R. Cooper

Dear Mr. Hallett,

This complaint addresses potential judicial misconduct by Judge Christopher R. Cooper due to revelations that his wife has served, and per our understanding continues to serve, in many legal roles where their joint financial interest is directly tied to embroiling President Trump in legal battles. This pecuniary interest, however, did not stop Judge Cooper from adjudicating cases involving President Trump.

I. Who We Are

The Center to Advance Security in America (CASA) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to improving the safety and security of the American people. CASA educates and informs the American people about the actions of their government and its officials that impact their safety; peace and security; democracy, civil rights, and civil liberties; and privacy.

II. Background

On December 18, 2025, the Board of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts “voted unanimously to rename the Kennedy Center to the Trump-Kennedy Center.”¹ The next day, workers added signage to the Kennedy Center reflecting the Board’s democratic choice.

¹ Karoline Leavitt (@PressSec), “I have just been informed that the highly respected Board of the Kennedy Center, some of the most successful people from all parts of the world, have just voted unanimously to rename the Kennedy Center to the Trump-Kennedy Center, because of the unbelievable work President Trump has done over the last year in saving the building. Not only from the standpoint of its reconstruction, but also financially, and its reputation. Congratulations to President Donald J. Trump, and likewise, congratulations to President Kennedy, because this will be a truly great team long into the future! The building will no doubt attain new levels of success and grandeur,” X, Dec. 18, 2025 1:11 PM, <https://x.com/PressSec/status/2001717032191168839?lang=en>.



On December 22, 2025, apparently after political backlash for her initial Board vote in favor of the name change, Representative Joyce Beatty filed a lawsuit against President Trump in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.² The case was assigned to Judge Cooper, and on May 29, 2026, Judge Cooper permanently enjoined the renaming of the Kennedy Center in a summary order.³

After Judge Cooper's order, it was uncovered via social media that his wife, Amy Jeffress, was a longtime Democrat-administration attorney and is the current personal attorney for former President Joseph R. Biden.⁴ Jeffress has represented numerous clients adverse to President Trump and has served in government capacities against the President, such as serving as counsel to the House Select Committee investigating the January 6 protests.⁵ At the time of Judge Cooper's order, and presently, Jeffress represents former President Biden against President Trump in ongoing legal action.⁶

III. Ethics Standards

- Canon 1 states “A Judge Should Uphold the Integrity and Independence of the Judiciary.”⁷
- Canon 2 states “A Judge Should Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in All Activities.”⁸
 - Canon 2(A) states “A judge should...act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.”⁹
 - Canon 2(B) states “A judge should not allow family, social, political, financial, or other

² Office of Joyce Beatty, “New Lawsuit Challenges Illegal Renaming of the Kennedy Center,” press release, December 22, 2025, <https://beatty.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/new-lawsuit-challenges-illegal-renaming-of-the-kennedy-center>.

³ *Beatty v. Trump*, Case No. 1:25-cv-04480-CRC, Order on Summary Judgment Motions, (D.D.C. May 29, 2026), https://f9c23fd5-1644-4a5f-a561-d04e6b5736d6.usrfiles.com/ugd/f9c23f_624f71b807dc482f8722794af3ea8775.pdf.

⁴ Hecker Fink, “Our Talent—Amy Jeffress,” accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.heckerfink.com/our-talent/amy-jeffress>.

⁵ Elaine Mallon, “‘Conflict of Interest’: Judge who axed Trump name from DC landmark tied to anti-Trump conspiracy theory,” *Fox News*, June 3, 2026, accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/judge-intimate-ties-dem-partys-key-russia-hoax-players-behind-latest-anti-trump-decision>.

⁶ *Biden, Jr. v. U.S. Dep’t of Justice*, 1:26-cv-01818 (D.D.C.), Docket, Court Listener, accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/73394227/biden-jr-v-us-department-of-justice/>.

⁷ Judicial Conference of the United States, *Code of Conduct for United States Judges*, March 2019, <https://www.uscourts.gov/administration-policies/judiciary-policies/ethics-policies/code-conduct-united-states-judges#b>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*



relationships to influence judicial conduct or judgment.”¹⁰

- Canon 3 states “A Judge Should Perform the Duties of the Office Fairly, Impartially and Diligently.”¹¹
 - Canon 3(A)(1) states “A judge...should not be swayed by partisan interests.”
 - Canon 3(C)(1) states “A judge shall disqualify himself or herself in a proceeding in which the judge’s impartiality might reasonably be questioned”—including when a “judge’s spouse” is “known by the judge to have an interest that could be substantially affected by the outcome of the proceeding.”

IV. Analysis

To be sure, this complaint is not about the merits of any particular case. Such grounds alone would be improper for a judicial complaint.¹² Instead, we are deeply concerned with the fact that a sitting federal judge did not recuse himself, and adjudicated to disposition, a case from which he and his spouse financially benefit. Indeed, a large portion of his wife’s business model appears to rely on handling litigation that is anti-Trump in nature.

Each of the canons above, and their several subparts, were likely violated by Judge Cooper not recusing himself—or at the very least *not disclosing* his and his wife’s interest—in the Kennedy Center case.

Canon 1 requires that a judge uphold the integrity and independence of the judiciary. Independence broadly requires “that judges are not subject to pressure and influence.”¹³ Judge Cooper, presumably, goes home every night to his wife whose career is predicated on suing President Trump. It would be odd to assume anything other than Judge Cooper and his wife talking about their days, his wife’s work, and the financial benefit they both enjoy from his wife bringing legal actions against the President. Not only does Judge Cooper have a pecuniary interest against President Trump—he also has a marital interest. While Judge Cooper may be a fine judge in other cases—perhaps even

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² 28 U.S.C. § 352(b)(1)(A)(ii).

¹³ American Bar Association, “Independent Judiciary,” accessed June 3, 2026,

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/resources/independent-judiciary-resources/.



cases involving political issues—the directness of his wife’s ties to legal challenges against President Trump compromises his independence as a jurist.

Canon 2 requires that a judge avoid even the *appearance* of impropriety—even if actual impropriety could be segregated. More specifically, Canon 2 lists occasions when the appearance of a relationship affects a judge’s ability to adjudicate a case: 1) when public confidence is hampered; and 2) when spousal relationships influence judicial conduct. Both problems are present here.

Judge Cooper has been on the bench since 2014.¹⁴ He has successfully heard plenty of cases involving political issues. A case involving President Trump—when his wife has built her brand around legal action against President Trump—is not like those. For good reason, the President immediately took umbrage when Judge Cooper’s wife’s longstanding ties to legal action against him and his supporters were unveiled on social media. There would have been no prejudice for Judge Cooper to recuse himself at the assignment of the case. There is at least the appearance of prejudice, however, in a judge ruling on cases where his joint financial and marital interests are impacted.

Canon 3 requires a judge to rule with fairness and impartiality. These qualities are presumed by the Canon to be adversely impacted when a judge could be swayed by “partisan interests” or when the interests of his spouse could “reasonably” call into question the judge’s fairness or impartiality. Again, the Code of Conduct is not narrowly constrained to actual, proven beyond a reasonable doubt, prejudice or compromise. All that is required is a “reasonable” concern. Given that Judge Cooper’s wife has an interest in the President losing legal challenges, and that type of link is *explicitly* contemplated by Canon 3(C)(1) as presumptively compromising fairness and impartiality, that is sufficient for discipline according to the Code of Conduct.

It should not be that the outcome of a case appears pre-determined the moment a judge is assigned. That imagery is—by definition—the appearance of impropriety. Judges who have ties such as the ones seen here should recuse themselves to avoid any risk of self-serving outcomes. Judge Cooper did not do that. Inquiry into this matter is more than warranted.

V. Conclusion

For each of the reasons stated herein, Judge Cooper should be investigated and, if found to have violated any of the above Canons, disciplined by the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals.

¹⁴ United States District Court for the District of Columbia, “District Judge Christopher R. Cooper,” accessed June 3, 2026, <https://www.dcd.uscourts.gov/content/district-judge-christopher-r-cooper>.



Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

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