

System skewed to benefit disciplined judges | FEEDBACK

Jul 24, 2025



Court gavel.

greenleaf123

On June 16, the Denver and Colorado Springs Gazettes published my guest column, "[Perspective: Above the Law](#)." In it, I raised concerns about conflicts among the Colorado Supreme Court, the Colorado Commission on Judicial Discipline (the CCJD), the Colorado Judicial Discipline Adjudicatory Board (the CJDAB), and the Colorado Judicial Discipline Rulemaking Committee (the CJDRC). Specifically, I described how individuals serving on these entities were apparently colluding to allow former 13th Judicial District Court Judge Justin Haenlein to retain an approximately \$120,000 windfall through a then-proposed stipulation resolving Judge Haenlein's judicial discipline proceedings in CCJD Case No. 24-176.



From Nov. 24, 2024 until his resignation on April 30, Judge Haenlein received his full pay (\$16,566.50 per month) and benefits while suspended under Colo. RJD 34. The CCJD delayed four months before initiating formal proceedings on March 17, 2025. In a departure from past practices where proposed stipulations were made public immediately upon their filing with the Colorado Supreme Court, the CJDAB panel refused to publish the stipulation with the other parts of the case record posted on the Weld County District Court's website. Instead of the new adjudicatory process being more transparent as intended by Colorado voters, the process has become only more shrouded in secrecy for the benefit of the subject judge.

The public should also have significant concerns the allegations against Judge Haenlein were apparently raised earlier in 2024 with Judge Haenlein still being able to seek retention in the November 2024 general election. Indeed, the 13th Judicial District Judicial Performance Commission unanimously supported Judge Haenlein's retention with a favorable recommendation.

Stay up to speed: [Sign up for daily opinion in your inbox Monday-Friday.](#)

My publicly expressed concerns were ignored and the CJDAB's hearing panel proceeded to issue its July 21, 2025 disciplinary order adopting the parties' stipulation (which did not require Judge Haenlein to refund the salary and benefits he unjustly received while suspended). Although not described in the media's coverage or in the CJDAB's final disciplinary order, the outcome of Judge Haenlein's case was further complicated by the fact his attorney, David Beller, is himself a member of the CJDRC.

Ultimately, the CJDRC has the authority to adopt rules (both prospectively and retroactively) that define the remedies available in the judicial discipline process, including disgorgement of a judge's salary and benefits received while on paid suspension.

Judge Haenlein's unjust enrichment and ability to profit from his significant and now admitted judicial misconduct is only the latest example of systemic public corruption and fraud within Colorado's Judiciary. Until there is public outrage, legislative action and a referral of the broader Colorado Judicial Scandal to conflict-free federal law enforcement, Colorado's endemic problems with a deficient judicial discipline system and the ongoing misuse of millions of taxpayer dollars will continue unabated.

Christopher Gregory

Longmont

Send us your feedback: [Click here.](#)

The author has served as a member, vice chair, chair and executive director of the Colorado Commission on Judicial Discipline.