



King County
District Court

NEWS RELEASE

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News Stories of a Judge's Use of Racist Language

SEATTLE – April 21, 2022 – To maintain public trust and confidence in our justice system, King County District Court (KCDC) emphatically reaffirms its commitment to equality and to ending systemic racism and bias, both explicit and implicit, wherever it is found.

“The Judiciary has zero tolerance for racism, racist words, or discrimination of any kind,” says King County District Court Chief Presiding Judge Matthew York. “King County District Court is responsible for providing equal access to justice for all, and our mission is to treat all persons with fairness and respect. Everyone who appears in our Court must feel that they are safe and will be treated equally. Only then can we build trust with historically marginalized communities.”

Recent news stories report that KCDC Judge Susan Mahoney used racist language during a meeting. Although the Court cannot comment, at this time, on the specific details of the incident, the KCDC judges take this matter very seriously. “While we move forward under the principles of due process, [the Washington State Judicial Code of Conduct](#) indicates the use of epithets or slurs is a manifestation of bias (see “Comment” Under Rule 2.3),” says Judge York. “Only the Commission on Judicial Conduct (CJC) or the voters can discipline a judge.”

“I want to assure court users, court staff and the public that the Court has taken the necessary steps to resolve this matter appropriately,” says Judge York. “Judge Mahoney will not have any supervisory role with staff and will not appear in court until this matter is settled.”

Information on the Court’s actions to combat racism are available in a [letter from Chief Presiding Judge Mathew York regarding King County District Court’s Commitment to Ending Systemic Racism and Bias](#).

About King County District Court

King County District Court is one of the busiest courts in Washington State, with 139,785 cases filed in 2021. The District Court holds court and provides public access at 10 facilities throughout King County: Auburn, Bellevue, Burien, Issaquah, King County Courthouse (Seattle), King County Jail (Seattle jail calendars only), Redmond, Maleng Regional Justice Center (Kent), Shoreline and Vashon Island (one day per month).

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