

The Honorable Governor Brian P. Kemp
Governor of Georgia
206 Washington Street
Suite 203, State Capitol
Atlanta, Ga. 30334

January 11, 2023

Dear Governor Kemp,

I am sending you this correspondence with my sincere regrets and deepest sorrow as I am tendering my resignation as Chief Magistrate Judge of the Habersham County Magistrate Court. It has been the greatest honor and privilege of my life to serve the citizens of Habersham County as judge; second only to an approximate 25 years of public service as a Georgia law enforcement officer.

I have been the subject matter of a Judicial Qualifications Commission inquiry since October 18th, 2021 for an incident that occurred at my home. Throughout the past approximate 15 months, I have been cooperative, forthright, and honest while working on my recovery for an underlying cumulative post traumatic stress disorder and an alcohol substance use disorder.

With deepest remorse, I have accepted full responsibility for my bad choices. I respectfully disagree with the alleged facts and circumstances as reported by the Judicial Qualifications Hearing Panel's final report and recommendation. However, my belief does not change the fact that the public's perception of my ability to be a judge has come into disrepute.

My recovery is successful and continuing. I feel that to continue with these lengthy judicial processes, such as the continued delays or an appeal, would not be in the interest of justice, fair to my wife and family, or serve the needs of the citizens of Habersham County or the State of Georgia.

Therefore, please accept my resignation while I work on my continued recovery.

Sincerely,


Gerald W. Johnson

Chief Magistrate Judge, Habersham County, State of Georgia

Cc: Dennis Cathey, Esq.
Adam Harkness, Esq.