

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 21-290

Judge: Keith Bee

Complainant: Commission on Judicial Conduct

ORDER

May 17, 2022

The Commission initiated an investigation following news reports that a former judicial officer had allegedly engaged in criminal activity during their tenure on the bench.

The Commission became aware through news reports in 2018 that former Pima County Justice of the Peace, Keith Bee, was indicted on several felony charges related to alleged tax fraud that would have occurred while he was serving as a judicial officer. Judge Bee had resigned from the bench a short time before the indictment. At that time, the Commission chose to monitor the criminal case. In 2021, former Judge Bee pled guilty to Making and Subscribing a False Income Tax Return, a felony offense in violation of 26 U.S.C. §7206(1). The conduct occurred while he was a judicial officer. At that time, the Commission initiated an investigation.

The Commission made multiple attempts to reach out to former Judge Bee in the hopes of pursuing a stipulated resolution that former Judge Bee would agree never to seek judicial office in the future. Former Judge Bee did not respond to the Commission's inquiries. On March 16, 2022, former Judge Bee was sentenced to six months in prison and ordered to pay \$343,133.05 in restitution.

Rather than expend the Commission's limited resources in pursuing formal charges against an individual who no longer holds judicial office, the Commission has chosen to close its investigation in this matter without an adjudication on the merits. Should former Judge Bee ever return or attempt to return to judicial service in the future, the Commission shall reopen this matter to pursue formal charges. Pursuant to Commission Rule 9(c)(2), the Commission has found good cause to disclose the existence of this investigation, and that it is in the interests of justice to make this disposition public. This order shall be posted to the Commission's website without any identifying information redacted.

Commission member Denise K. Aguilar did not participate in the consideration of this matter.

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on May 17, 2022.

ARIZONA

Former Arizona legislator Keith Bee pleads guilty to filing false tax returns

Associated Press

Published 8:32 a.m. MT Aug. 31, 2021

TUCSON — Former Arizona legislator and ex-Pima County Justice of the Peace Keith Bee has pleaded guilty in federal court to submitting false income tax returns.

Bee, a 55-year-old Republican, entered his plea last Friday in U.S. District Court in Tucson.

Bee is scheduled to be sentenced on Nov. 9 and is facing up to 10 months of prison or home confinement and must pay \$343,000 in restitution to the Internal Revenue Service, prosecutors said.

Bee served in the state House from 1991-93 and the Arizona Senate from 1993-2001 representing Tucson's District 9. He was a justice of the peace from 2007-18 and retired from the bench soon after charges were made public. He was indicted in 2018.

According to the plea agreement, Bee admitted to the IRS that he submitted false tax returns in 2011-13 totaling nearly \$215,000 in unpaid taxes for lavish sports cars he originally claimed were business expenses for his bus company.