

Update: Joel Baker Should Resign

"If he won't resign, Grassroots America's legal action will seek to have him removed in court proceedings."

Before we list the sources for information on this ongoing and developing story, the following is a statement JoAnn Fleming, our executive director sent to the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* on March 15. This statement was printed in its entirety:

"First, we are sad for the situation in which Joel has placed his family. **We urge the household of faith to pray for them and for Joel.**

Mr. Baker's problems are of his **own** making, and he needs to get his life straightened out for the sake of his children; however, we believe he has lost the moral authority to chair the Commissioners Court, to preside over the Probate Court and the Juvenile Board, and to oversee mental commitments. A refusal to willingly step down will only cause more turmoil for Smith County, and we believe the citizens deserve better; therefore, we have no choice but to seek a legal remedy. Pursuant to Chapter 87.011 of the Local Government Code, we are consulting with legal counsel to investigate our options for a "Removal by Petition and Trial." In that scenario, we anticipate several witnesses being called for the public trial."

In case you missed the initial 3/14/16 KLTV investigative report, don't know the details, or are confused, the following news sources should fill in the blanks:

<http://www.kltv.com/category/7845/east-texas-news> Click on the picture of Baker at the top of the page for the entirety of their coverage on this topic.

Original 3/14 investigative report: <http://www.kltv.com/story/31467865/texas-judge-accused-of-sexting-while-sitting-on-judicial-conduct-board>

Grassroots America's call for Baker's resignation: <http://gawtp.com/baker-should-resign/>

Grassroots America interview from this week (Thursday, 3/24), speaking about our action to file a "Petition for Removal by Petition and Trial": <http://www.kltv.com/story/31558660/group-pursuing-legal-petition-to-remove-smith-co-judge>

On 3/22/16 the *Tyler Morning Telegraph* called for Baker to resign. Find that editorial and all related stories here: <http://www.tylerpaper.com/TP-Breaking/233118/tyler-paper-calls-on-county-judge-joel-baker-to-step-down>

KETK and Fox 51 related reporting: <http://www.myeasttex.com/news/local-news/gawtp-calls-for-resignation-of-judge-joel-baker-following-allegations>

CBS 19 related coverage: <http://www.cbs19.tv/story/31468839/grassroots-america-group-calls-for-judge-joel-bakers-resignation>

<http://www.houstonpress.com/news/judge-accused-of-sexting-while-reviewing-judicial-misconduct-complaints-at-meeting-8247086>

Quick Facts:

There are now **two** ongoing investigations into the Smith County Commissioners Court and County Judge Joel P. Baker by the Texas Attorney General's Office and the FBI. **These investigations were triggered by the official complaint filed by Grassroots America on May 6, 2015. Our complaint questions the legality of the process by which a ten-year contract for a mobile traffic camera system was approved by the Smith County Commissioners Court.** The original GAWTP complaint and associated

documents can be found by clicking [here](#). Since our original complaint was filed, more evidence was discovered and turned over to investigating authorities.

A **third investigation** is underway as the result of evidence turned over to KLTV by a forensic specialist. Baker sexting during the time he was supposed to be fulfilling his state and county duties is underway by the **State Commission on Judicial Conduct**, a disciplinary body on which Baker himself served as Vice-Chairman until suddenly resigning on March 4. Following the 3/14/16 KLTV investigative report, which revealed the existence of 1,000 sexting messages, photos, and videos, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued this statement, *“In light of the information contained in the media story, the Commission will be initiating an investigation into the alleged conduct of the judge. No further statements will be issued at this time.”*

What is the Code of Judicial Conduct?

Click this link to read it. <https://www.legalethicstexas.com/Ethics-Resources/Rules/Texas-Code-of-Judicial-Conduct.aspx>

Quick, Easy Recipes for Losing Your Credibility or Your Job – A message delivered to the Texas Association of Counties Annual Conference (mandated continuing education for County Judges and Commissioners) in 2007 and updated in 2010 by Mr. Scott Brumley, Potter County Attorney. Click this link to open: [Potter County Attorney Scott Brumley's Paper](#)