

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 9, 2025

The Honorable Roy H. Wiggins
Chief Judge
North Carolina Judicial District 26
832 E Fourth St, Ste 9600
Charlotte, NC 28202

Dear Chief Judge Wiggins,

We are writing to urge that you initiate proceedings under North Carolina General Statute § 7A-173(a) for the removal of Magistrate Teresa Stokes from office. That statute provides for the removal of a magistrate for willful and persistent failure to perform the duties of the office or conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute.

Magistrate Stokes's actions in the case of Decarlos Brown, Jr. clearly meet both of these grounds for removal. In January 2025, Magistrate Stokes authorized the release of Brown based solely on his "written promise" to appear for a future court date. This decision was made despite Brown's extensive criminal history, which included at least 14 prior arrests for serious offenses such as possession of a firearm by a felon, robbery with a dangerous weapon, and physical assault of his sister. In 2014, he was sentenced to five years in prison for robbery with a dangerous firearm. The January charge, a Class 1 misdemeanor, arose after Brown became combative with police officers. Yet despite this history of violent and unstable behavior, Magistrate Stokes released Brown without requiring bond or imposing any meaningful conditions to safeguard the public.

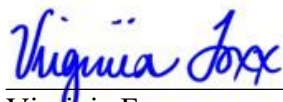
This reckless decision had devastating consequences. On August 22, 2025, while his misdemeanor case was still pending, Brown boarded a Charlotte light rail train and fatally stabbed 23-year-old Iryna Zarutskia in the neck as she was returning home from work. Ms. Zarutskia's murder was not only a profound personal tragedy but also a direct result of a failure of judicial responsibility. By releasing a repeat violent offender on nothing more than his written promise to appear, Magistrate Stokes displayed a willful failure to perform the duties of her office and engaged in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice, as set forth in N.C.G.S. § 7A-173(a). Her decision has undermined public confidence in the judicial system and exposed the community to wholly preventable harm.

For these reasons, we urge you to commence formal removal proceedings against Magistrate Teresa Stokes. We further request that the Court conduct a thorough review of her prior bond determinations to assess the full extent of misconduct. North Carolinians deserve to know that those entrusted with judicial authority exercise it with diligence, responsibility, and regard for the safety of the community.

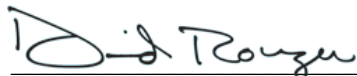
Sincerely,



Tim Moore
Member of Congress



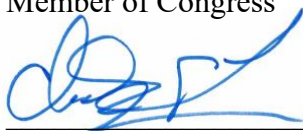
Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



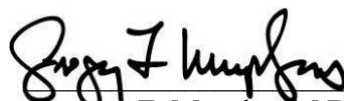
David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



Chuck Edwards
Member of Congress



Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



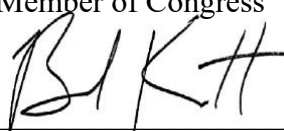
Addison P. McDowell
Member of Congress



Mark Harris
Member of Congress



Pat Harrigan
Member of Congress



Brad Knott
Member of Congress