

1 TO: THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT - JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

2
3 FROM: PETER T. SZYMONIK

4 GLASTONBURY, CT

5
6 DATE: 28 JANUARY 2015

7 RE: TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF JUDGE FRAZZINI'S REAPPOINTMENT

8
9 My name is Peter Szymonik, I am a Polish immigrant and I and my family
10 members have lived and worked in Connecticut most of our lives. I have spent
11 most of my career working in or for the legal industry. I worked for many
12 years at the same prestigious law firm which produced Senator Blumenthal,
13 Justice Bright, former Supreme Court Justice McLachlan and Chief State
14 Justice Chase Rogers. Our law firm prided and distinguished itself by
15 requiring the highest possible level of ethical standards and professional
16 behavior from its partners, attorneys and staff.

17 Over the course of my career, I have worked with literally hundreds of
18 law firms and attorneys. I sat on and chaired many local and national legal
19 industry committees. I am an expert in legal operations; corporate legal
20 bill audit and review, legal spend management and business process
21 improvement.

22 I respectfully submit to the Judiciary Committee my testimony in
23 opposition of the reappointment of Judge Stephen Frazzini for the following
24 reasons, most notably, his failure to uphold his Oath of Office and his
25 failure to place the best interests of children, families and justice first
26 and foremost.

1 In 2005, I was wrongfully terminated for taking an ethical stand in
2 what became a precedent setting employment related litigation case in this
3 state.

4 When it became apparent that I would prevail towards the end of 2006,
5 my opportunistic and former wife of 16 years unexpectedly file for divorce.

6 She hired an attorney and collectively started a well-orchestrated
7 campaign to harass and threaten me, to seize the assets I had secured for our
8 family, to financially devastate me, to take the home I had built for us from
9 me and to keep our two sons (then 5 and 2 years old) from me as I was
10 struggling and facing an extremely challenging and life-altering situation.

11 The divorce was finalized in April of 2008, but not before leaving me
12 financially devastated. I was left unemployed with three mortgages to pay,
13 saddled with the majority of the martial debt, all of my retirement and
14 savings accounts were depleted, my previously stellar credit ratings were
15 ruined and my home of 13 years entered foreclosure. My former wife, ended up
16 with the majority of our liquid assets, including well over \$100,000 in cash.
17 And in spite of this, I was ordered to pay child support. However, I was
18 able to remain an equal parent in my young sons' lives.

19 However, even this was not enough as my former wife unfortunately and
20 openly resented this outcome.

21 Just four months later, my former wife returned to court and filed an
22 Ex Parte motion against me, just as my son with autism was about to start
23 school. She sought full custody of sons based on wholly self-manufactured
24 and completely unsubstantiated claims she made against me and my elderly
25 mother. My mother is a loving Polish grandmother, a woman who worked in the
26 Newington Children's Hospital for 12 years. She helped me raise my sons as I
27 looked for new employment and my sons adore her.

1 My former wife's own attorney refused to support her and her motion,
2 withdrawing from the case and her presentation of my former wife as soon as
3 the Ex Parte was filed.

4 In spite of the overwhelming evidence before him that my former wife's
5 claims were completely based on falsehoods, with no evidence of any kind to
6 support her claims, Judge Frazzini ordered that my sons be taken from me and
7 not allowed to even visit with me or their grandparents. This based on no
8 factual or independently verified evidence before him of any kind.

9 DCF was engaged on the case and a Guardian ad Litem was assigned, Mr.
10 Barry Armata. As the hearings progressed, the evidence was abundantly clear
11 that my former wife had in fact lied to the court. In spite of this, Judge
12 Frazzini refused to allow my sons reasonable and unsupervised visitation time
13 with me. He refused to allow my young sons' grandparents to have any contact
14 with my sons of any kind. When visitation was allowed months later, Judge
15 Frazzini did nothing when he was informed that my former wife was defying his
16 court orders and caused my sons to miss no fewer than nineteen (19) court
17 ordered visitations with me.

18 Judge Frazzini allowed the Guardian ad Litem (GAL) on the case, Mr.
19 Barry Armata (then the "GAL-in-Chief" in Hartford) to bill excessive amounts
20 of money he knew I had no way to pay, while also being aware that this GAL
21 was spending next no time at all meeting with my sons or working on the case.

22 Judge Frazzini allowed Mr. Armata to go backwards in the case, and
23 ordered very expensive court order therapy and redundant custody evaluations,
24 when we had just concluded over a year's worth of the exact same evaluations
25 during the divorce in 2007 - evaluations which concluded that equal and
26 shared parenting would be in our sons' best interests. Judge Frazzini and
27 Mr. Armata, attempted to unravel this for no good reason or cause, other than
28 to financially enrich Mr. Armata and the "court appointed experts" Mr. Armata

1 demanded be engaged on the case, and knowing there would be no way to pay for
2 these services given my dire financial situation.

3 Judge Frazzini completely ignored the enormous negative financial and
4 emotional impact all of this was having on my young sons, myself, my mother
5 and our family - as well as the impact on our health and well-being.

6 Judge Frazzini showed no concern whatsoever when he was informed that
7 my sons, who previously saw their loving grandparents almost every day of
8 their lives, had been prevented from seeing them for so long that my sons
9 believed that their grandparents "had died and were calling them on the phone
10 from heaven."

11 Judge Frazzini showed no concern when he was informed that a court
12 ordered evaluator, Dr. Grant-Hall, was so horrified by the impact that this
13 was having on my sons, that she wrote a letter to the court to express her
14 grave concerns and that Mr. Armata essentially told her to "keep her mouth
15 shut." Judge Frazzini showed complete and utter disregard for this.

16 Instead, in December of 2008, Judge Frazzini unexpectedly issued highly
17 unusual orders that ordered me to pay \$2,500 directly to Mr. Armata, and
18 directing Mr. Armata use my money to pay a court ordered psychologist.

19 Judge Frazzini further ordered that I pay an additional \$2,000 directly
20 to Mr. Armata in "attorney's fees" this well after the divorce was over.

21 Judge Frazzini further ordered that I place "no further encumbrances"
22 on my home and property, preventing me from accessing the only source of
23 liquid assets I had available to pay the onerous and draconian legal fees I
24 was again being forced to bear, the remaining equity left in my home.

25 Judge Frazzini was well aware that I was unemployed, and that by
26 issuing his orders, the one and only source of assets I would have left to
27 pay the GAL and Mr. Armata, would be to liquidate my son's college funds, the
28 sole asset I managed to protect during the divorce.

1 Judge Frazzini again showed complete and utter disregard for my sons,
2 my family and myself, as he purposely worked with Mr. Armata to create a
3 situation where I was forced to hand all of my sons' college fund money, to
4 Mr. Armata.

5 Judge Frazzini issued a capias against me, forcing me to pay to Mr.
6 Armata or be unlawfully incarcerated.

7 Judge Frazzini issued a capias against me in order the threaten and
8 force me to pay an attorney's fees - in direct violation of state and federal
9 law, as debtor's prisons were outlawed in this country in 1842 and banned by
10 the state.

11 Mr. Armata forced me to pay him using two money orders, one made out
12 to him, and one made out to him as "Trustee." Mr. Armata offered no
13 explanation for this. I later discovered a letter in my case file showing
14 that Mr. Armata paid \$2,500 to a Dr. Stein-Liete. Dr. Stein-Liete, was never
15 once engaged in my case in any manner. Begging the question of why Mr. Armata
16 used my money (from my sons' college funds) to pay her, and why Judge
17 Frazzini ordered this.

18 In early 2009, it became blatantly obvious based on sworn testimony
19 from many different people, including the DCF social worker who investigated
20 my former wife's claims, that my former wife completely manufactured the
21 claims she made against me and my elderly mother, and they were baseless.
22 Every court appointed evaluator, again determined that equal and shared
23 parenting was in my sons' best interests.

24 Because of what Judge Frazzini ordered and allowed, my two young sons,
25 one with autism, were kept from seeing me and their grandparents for *months*
26 for no valid reason and on false pretenses.

27 Judge Frazzini showed complete disregard for this. He did not penalize
28 or hold my former wife accountable in any way.

1 Judge Frazzini's sole focus during these hearings was to unnecessarily
2 prolong them, to revisit and rehash issues which the court had already
3 examined and ruled on at a substantial cost in terms of money and time, and
4 to cause me further financial devastation on top of what I and my family had
5 already suffered due to the failures of our family court system and Mr.
6 Armata's negligence.

7 For these and other reasons, for the very real harm Judge Frazzini
8 caused me, my son and my family members, and harm from which I and my family
9 are still struggling to recover from to this day - I respectfully submit that
10 Judge Frazzini should not be reappointed and allowed to continue being a
11 judge in our state.

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13 Peter T. Szymonik
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