

Recap of disciplinary actions against Union County employee Joe Renna

As an employee of the County of Union, I was involved in the production of a news letter called Directions. The newsletter was printed by a company named AFL Printing. AFL was chosen to get the job over a printing broker doing business as SVO Printing. This was done much to the dismay of Assemblywoman Linda Stender who was involved in the selection of the printer. Though it was not my job to select the printer, I was set up as the reason the project did not go to SVO. The county sought to terminate me. For over one year, I had to battle, termination notices, negative reviews transfers and suspensions. My supervisors and employees at the county actually fabricated evidence and perjured themselves under oath in my departmental hearings, before a county judge and before a state administrative law judge.

One reason why I was targeted may be because of my knowledge that SVO's Quote was \$72,000, almost \$50,000 more than that of AFL's, who did the job for \$24,000. It would seem illogical that SVO would get that print job knowing that they were almost three times higher than the competing quote. During discovery for my departmental hearing, I discovered that SVO printed the newsletter in the past and charged \$40,000 more than the competing quote.

The choice to use SVO stems from the fact that the printing broker is Richard Stender, the husband of Linda Stender. When SVO received the bid to print the newsletter in 1999, Linda Stender was a sitting Union County Freeholder. She was also sitting on the Board of Directors of the Union County Alliance (UCA), who published the newsletter in conjunction with the county. The UCA is funded by the County of Union.

Linda Stender's name surfaced during the discovery process of my hearing. It was also revealed that four county employees orchestrated the attempt to have me terminated. They are, County Manager George Devanney, Director of Economic Development James Daley, Director of Communications Michael Murray and Project manager Salena Carroll. County council told my attorney, Richard Wischusen that the county should pursue charges against me from the county prosecutor.

In June of 2003 I started a campaign to run for the Union County Board of Freeholders as an Independent candidate. Attempts to terminate me and disciplinary action against me was stepped up. I was told I was a "Special case" and to watch what I do.

The following is an overview of the issues surrounding my case. Extensive amount of evidence exists to support my claims and are a matter of public record as part of my administrative court cases.

I only had resources to defend my first termination. The administrative law judge ruled in my favor in every count. My attorney is Richard Wischusen 908-665-1166. A copy of the decision can be found on my website at: <http://www.joerenna.com/campaign04/decision.html> The docket numbers for the case are: (OAL DKT NO. CSV 3196-03, Agency DKT. NO. 2003-2372)

Disciplinary actions

July 22, 2002

I received a Notice of Termination for incompetency and insubordination based on the production of the June 2002 issue of the Directions newsletter.

Under the direction of George Devanney, charges were brought forward by Salena Carroll with the help of Michael Murray and signed off by James Daley.

My defense showed that Carroll and Devanney presented false statements to base the disciplinary action on. The judges stated in her decision that their statements were not supported by the proof. .

It was proven that Salena Carroll backdated emails by one month in order to show that she was timely in her responsibilities and to suggest that I failed to perform my duties. Unbeknownst to her, proof of the backdating was recorded on the email server's computer.

Physical evidence and testimony presented during my hearing proved that both Murray and Carroll lied under oath.

The hearing of this case resulted in me being suspended without pay for 45 days.

I appealed the decision in the State appellate court and the judge ruled in my favor on all counts. She found no grounds for termination and noted that the county witness lacked credibility and pointed to suspicious backdated email.

December 9, 2002

I received a Notice of Termination during my hearing, served to me by a uniformed police officer at my house in the evening while I was having dinner with my family. The notice claimed that I failed to perform my duties.

It was revealed during discovery that the claim was based on a directive sent via email to me from Michael Murray. The evidence showed that an email address with my name was set up on the county main computer but was not installed on my personal computer.

As a result of this the county requested the notice be retracted.

January 7, 2003

The County settles a case and pays my wife Tina the money that is owed her by the Union County Alliance for selling ads for the spring 2002 newsletter. They had refused to pay her under the instruction of George Devanney.

February 20, 2003

I was reassigned to Runnells Hospital. I am now working out of my title. I was not transferred though. I was still working for the department of Economic Development under James Daley.

October 9, 2003

Received a Negative review on my 2002 performance and was denied a raise. Claims made from my termination notice were cited It was

discovered that my signature was forged by being photocopied onto a new evaluation form signed by the County Manager, George Devanney.

November 13, 2003

Received a negative evaluation for my 2003 performance and am denied a raise.

December 7, 2003

I received a termination notice for retuning late from lunch. The facts of the situation being a fatal motorcycle accident on Rt. 22 was presented during the hearing. Also presented during the hearing was my email correspondence with my director and proof of me making up the time in the evening. My director contradicted his personal assurance that my action for that day were sufficient.

I was suspended 3 days.

December 12, 2003

I received a termination notice for failure to perform. The notice claimed that I did not show up for work on Dec 5, 2003 and did not call saying that I would be out.

During my hearing I presented an email from the morning of that day where I informed my supervisor that I will not be in.

County claims that they didn't see email. I received a call on Monday from my job about my Friday absence and informed the county that I took a sick day and that I emailed the message.

I received 15 day suspension.

January 22, 2004

I was terminated for abandoning my Job. The departmental hearing was held the week I was on vacation in Florida. I did not attend the hearing and I was terminated.