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RECEIVED
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SC Court of Appeals

The Honorable Chief Justice John W. Kittredge

Supreme Court of South Carolina
1231 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Re: Request for Supervisory Intervention and Guidance Concerning Systemic Misconduct in Oconee County Probate and Circuit Courts; Ongoing Harm to My Family and to Public Confidence in the Judiciary

Dear Chief Justice,

I write to the Supreme Court of South Carolina to ask a simple but urgent question: Is there any meaningful accountability within the courts of this State when judges act vindictively, disregard basic procedure, and use the judiciary's power to punish protected speech? My family and I have suffered severe and well-documented harm at the hands of Probate Judge Danny Singleton and Circuit Judge Lawton McIntosh in Oconee County. Despite multiple reports to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel and detailed filings requesting sanctions, the misconduct has continued unabated. I respectfully request that this Court exercise its supervisory authority to intervene—or, at minimum, provide concrete guidance on how justice can prevail in these circumstances.

I. Summary of Core Due-Process Violations and Retaliation for Protected Speech

- 1. Retaliatory contempt for protected speech.** I was tried in the Oconee County Probate Court for “civil contempt” as retaliation for First Amendment–protected criticism of Judge Danny Singleton. The proceeding was a sham: the judge functioned simultaneously as lead witness, prosecutor, supervisor of witnesses he called, investigator collecting statements and affidavits, and the purported victim.
- 2. Proceedings without a proper case number; denial of counsel.** I was denied a public defender, summoned under an irrelevant civil case number, and twice sentenced to jail without any case number for the same alleged infraction.
- 3. Criminal punishment predicated on a non-criminal administrative order.** I was convicted of violating an order I had no notice of. Judge Singleton responded, “ignorance of the law is no excuse,” conflating violation of a court order with

violation of state law. The order at issue was a South Carolina Supreme Court administrative order, which carries no criminal provision, yet I received custodial sentences (ten days, then fifty).

4. **Rubber-stamped affirmance in the Tenth Circuit.** On appeal, Judge Lawton McIntosh upheld the Probate Court's ruling despite the obvious procedural defects and constitutional violations. This decision legitimized a fraudulent proceeding and further eroded confidence in the courts.

II. Coercive Use of a Criminal Sentence to Force Dismissal of Appeals

- My wife—five months pregnant and caring for our one-year-old at the time—was sentenced by Judge Singleton to 180 days in jail after a proceeding as defective as mine. She timely appealed, which stayed the sentence.
- Rather than allow the Court of Appeals to adjudicate the issues on the merits, the criminal sentence was used as leverage to coerce dismissal of her pending appeals “under the guise” of closing an estate matter. The Probate Court then rescinded its own criminal sentence—without new trial, evidence, appellate ruling, or pardon—conditioned on abandoning appeals that would have exposed the pattern of misconduct.
- Judge McIntosh was directly involved in orchestrating and enabling this result and continues to preside over my wife's cases.

This extraordinary use of a criminal sentence to block appellate review is, in my respectful view, intolerable in a State governed by law. It undermines the authority of the Court of Appeals, chills the exercise of appellate rights, and signals to all sitting judges that accountability can be avoided through coercion.

III. Continuing Pattern of Bias and Overreach in the Circuit Court

- **Corporate veil disregarded without piercing:** Judge McIntosh recently held my wife personally liable for corporate debt without any finding that the corporate veil was pierced, awarding over \$100,000 more than was requested in the complaint and without proven damages.
- **Premature trials and denial of continuances:** While our family is presently in Africa, the court has scheduled additional trials, denied continuances, and pressed ahead despite all parties acknowledging the trials are premature. Discovery is incomplete.

- **Refusal to recuse:** Despite clear evidence of bias and prior involvement in matters that are the subject of our appeals, recusal has been requested and refused.

The cumulative picture is one of vindictiveness and open defiance of procedural safeguards, with the court's power repeatedly weaponized against my family. This is not a single misstep—it is a pattern.

IV. Why I Am Asking the Supreme Court to Act

I recognize and respect judicial independence and the separation of roles among trial, appellate, and disciplinary bodies. However, the facts presented here show an entrenched practice in Oconee County of protecting state actors and punishing those who challenge misconduct, aided by procedural improvisations that defeat meaningful appellate review. Prior efforts—appeals, motions for sanctions, and complaints to disciplinary authorities—have not halted the harm.

V. Requested Relief and Guidance

With respect, I ask this Court to consider the following supervisory measures and guidance:

1. Immediate protective relief.

- **Stay** ongoing and imminent proceedings in my family's cases in the Tenth Circuit pending proper review.
- **Reassign those matters** to a judge outside the Tenth Circuit or transfer venue to ensure impartial adjudication.

2. Direction on due process and enforceability.

- Clarify that administrative orders lacking criminal provisions cannot support criminal punishment or custodial sanctions absent proper charging instruments, notice, counsel, and the full panoply of constitutional safeguards.
- Direct that contempt or quasi-criminal proceedings be docketed under proper case numbers and adjudicated with appointment of counsel where liberty is at stake.

3. Protection of appellate rights.

- Proscribe the use of criminal sentences as leverage to secure the dismissal of pending appeals, and direct lower courts to refrain from any agreements or orders that condition relief on abandoning appellate review.

4. Referral for investigation.

- Refer the conduct of **Judge Danny Singleton** and **Judge Lawton McIntosh** to the appropriate disciplinary and judicial-standards authorities for investigation of:
 - (a) retaliation against protected speech;
 - (b) adjudication without proper dockets or case numbers;
 - (c) denial of counsel where incarceration was imposed or threatened;
 - (d) coercive use of criminal sentencing to extinguish appeals; and
 - (e) persistent refusal to recuse in the face of objective indications of bias.

- 5. **Any further relief this Court deems just and proper** to restore confidence in the administration of justice and prevent further harm to my family.


VI. Closing

This letter is not written in anger but in conscience. I have tried to respect decorum, to exhaust every available process, and to trust that the system would correct itself. Instead, we have encountered retaliation for speech, disregard of basic procedure, and coercion designed to prevent appellate accountability. If the courts will not protect constitutional rights—especially when judges themselves are the actors—who will protect the people?

I respectfully ask the Supreme Court to act with urgency. I am prepared to supply transcripts, orders, filings, and correspondence referenced above and to make myself available for any further inquiry, including by remote appearance given my current presence in Africa.

Thank you for your attention and for your stewardship of the integrity of South Carolina's judiciary.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason M. Boyle, Ph.D.