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***Via e-mail CRRD@courts.mo.gov, 1st Class U.S. Mail

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Commission on Retirement, Removal and Discipline

PO Box 1529
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Re: Inadequate Disciplinary Action Against Judge Joe Don McGaugh and Recommendation for Criminal Referral

To the Members of the Commission:

I am writing to express deep concern and disappointment regarding the disciplinary outcome involving Judge Joe Don McGaugh. The imposition of a one-year suspension is, in my view, wholly inadequate when weighed against the nature and impact of his misconduct. The consequence fails to reflect the severity of his actions and does not serve the broader public interest in deterring similar abuse by other judicial officers.

Let me be unequivocal: I do not advocate violence or lawlessness in any form. However, I raise this issue within the framework of constitutional principles. The **Second Amendment** was not only conceived as a safeguard for self-defense, but also as a check against government tyranny—a reminder that government officials, including judges, must remain accountable to the people they serve. When that accountability is reduced to symbolic discipline, the constitutional balance begins to erode; and so does the motivation to NOT engage in misconduct.

Judge McGaugh's conduct, which includes manipulating, frustrating, and subverting the judicial process for the benefit of personal or political allies, represents a form of **tyranny**—the very kind our Constitution was designed to prevent. More gravely, his actions deprived me of my **fundamental right to due process**, protected under both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. Such acts are not only unethical but may rise to the level of criminal violations under **18 U.S.C. § 242**, which prohibits the deprivation of rights under color of law.

For these reasons, I **strongly urge the Commission to refer Judge McGaugh for federal criminal investigation**. When a judicial officer intentionally violates the rights of citizens, particularly while under scrutiny for prior misconduct, it is no longer a matter of administrative discipline alone—it becomes a matter of law enforcement. If this Commission truly seeks to uphold the integrity of the judiciary, then such a referral is not only warranted—it is essential.

The attempt to excuse Judge McGaugh's conduct as a consequence of mental health struggles should be met with serious skepticism. The pattern of behavior did not cease during the investigation; in fact, it continued. That fact alone undermines any argument that this was an isolated lapse or involuntary condition. Hiding behind mental illness to escape accountability for willful and injurious conduct is a disservice both to those genuinely afflicted and to the public's trust in the judiciary.

The appropriate and proportionate response would have been **permanent removal from the bench, disbarment, and referral for criminal prosecution**. A suspension—especially one as short as one year—sends the wrong message to the public and to others in power: that serious misconduct can be brushed aside without lasting consequence.

I urge this Commission to reconsider how it approaches egregious abuses of judicial authority. Upholding public trust demands consequences that reflect the full weight of constitutional principles and the real-world impact of judicial misconduct.

Sincerely,

Christopher Larsen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Christopher Larsen".

CC: Missouri Attorney General, Andrew Bailey
Supreme Court Building - 207 West High Street, PO Box 899 - Jefferson City, MO 65102