

Liability Summary — Aaron C. Knapp vs. City of Lorain Officials

Prepared for: Gallagher Bassett Services — Claim #002653-004828-GL-01

Prepared by: Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW, CDCA

Date: July 14, 2025

1. Overview

Between 2022 and 2025, I, Aaron Knapp, a licensed social worker and youth counselor, exercised my constitutionally protected rights to free speech and petition. I raised legitimate concerns about the Lorain Police Department's censorship of public dialogue, the unlawful release of juvenile records, and repeated accountability failures.

Rather than address these concerns through proper channels, senior City of Lorain officials — including Chief James McCann, Safety-Service Director Rey Carrion, Juvenile Court Administrator Tim Wietzel, and Assistant Law Director Joseph LaVeck — engaged in a clear pattern of retaliation, concealment, misuse of confidential records, and obstruction of lawful access to public information.

Their collective actions violated both federal and state law, directly caused the loss of my job and professional standing, and inflicted substantial reputational and emotional harm.

2. Key Individuals and Their Roles

Chief James McCann:

- Accessed and released confidential law enforcement investigatory records (CLEIRS) about me to an outside party without a valid purpose.
- Submitted false and defamatory complaints to the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker & Marriage and Family Therapist Board, which were ultimately dismissed.
- Made demonstrably false sworn statements alleging that I misrepresented myself as an “officer of the court.”
- Directly interfered with my employment by improperly sharing private information with the Juvenile Court Administrator, causing my suspension and termination.
- Ordered the shutdown of public comments on the LPD Facebook page to suppress protected criticism, violating my First Amendment rights.
- Obstructed my repeated attempts to file good-faith complaints by dismissing, minimizing, or ignoring credible evidence.

Tim Wietzel (Juvenile Court Administrator):

- Acted on false and confidential information provided by McCann, terminating my work with the court's diversion program and barring me from serving as a Guardian ad Litem.
- Maintained backchannel communications with McCann that circumvented my right to fair notice and process.

Rey Carrion (Safety-Service Director):

- Failed to investigate or discipline McCann's misconduct despite holding final decision-making authority for the City's police operations.
- Tolerated or ignored clear evidence of retaliatory conduct, allowing the pattern to continue.

Joseph LaVeck (Assistant Law Director / Police Legal Advisor):

- Repeatedly denied the existence of key public records — including the Board emails and other communications — that were ultimately produced only under threat of litigation.
- Provided misleading or incomplete legal opinions that obstructed access to public information and enabled further retaliation.

3. Legal Violations

The following laws and legal duties were breached:

- **42 U.S.C. §1983 (First Amendment Retaliation):** Retaliation for protected speech and petition activity.
- **Ohio Revised Code §2921.05 (Felony Retaliation):** Retaliation against a public servant and witness.
- **Ohio Revised Code §2917.21 (Telecommunications Harassment):** Misuse of email and other electronic communications to damage my livelihood.
- **Ohio Revised Code §2921.45 (Interference with Civil Rights):** Deprivation of constitutional rights under color of law.
- **18 U.S.C. §§241, 242 (Federal Criminal Civil Rights):** Conspiracy and deprivation of rights under color of law.
- **Ohio Public Records Act (R.C. 149.43):** Multiple denials and delays of lawfully requested records.
- **FERPA and Ohio Juvenile Privacy Statutes:** Improper disclosure of protected juvenile records.
- **Common Law Torts:** Defamation, tortious interference with contract, and civil conspiracy.

4. Pattern of Retaliation

The attached timeline demonstrates a consistent pattern of:

- **Concealment:** Denial of responsive records, later produced only under legal threat.
- **Retaliation:** Removal from City Hall, defamatory reports to licensing authorities, and intentional damage to my employment.
- **Obstruction:** The Law Department and Safety-Service Director failed to stop or correct the Chief's actions despite clear evidence.
- **Forced Disclosure:** Critical emails and reports were produced only after multiple statutory notices, legal filings, and sustained pressure.

5. Damages

- **Lost Wages:** Over \$12,800 in confirmed income loss, with additional ongoing lost income from court-related contract work and volunteer opportunities.
- **Reputational Harm:** False statements damaged my standing with employers, the licensing board, and the juvenile court system.
- **Emotional Distress:** Documented mental health impacts, including anxiety and PTSD symptoms, directly resulting from harassment and retaliation.
- **Administrative Costs:** Substantial time and expense to pursue records and prepare a civil rights complaint pro se.
- **Potential Punitive Exposure:** The pattern of misconduct demonstrates reckless disregard for my civil rights and may support punitive damages under federal law.

6. Settlement Demand

The evidence in the record is clear, consistent, and supported by City-produced documents. The facts demonstrate a deliberate effort by multiple City officials to retaliate against me for exercising protected rights and to hide that conduct through misrepresentation and delay.

I am prepared to resolve this matter now for **\$450,000**, a reasonable amount that reflects proven economic losses, significant reputational damage, documented emotional distress, and the cost of defending an escalating federal civil rights action. This offer is **time-limited** to protect all parties from additional exposure, litigation costs, and public scrutiny.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Christopher Knapp, BSSW, LSW, CDCA
July 14, 2025