Commissioners receive Offer to Settle in Latest Lawsuit!!! Conditional Offer to settle for $125,000 if settled IMMEDIATELY!!! Lawsuit against Commissioners, DSS and Doug Bridges for Employment Discrimination based on race and retaliation!!! Commissioner's New Lawyer scolded by Plaintiff!!! Report and recommendation by Robert A. Williams

This Federal lawsuit, Rev. Dante Murphy v. Cleveland County Commissioners, Doug Bridges, DSS Director Katie Swanson and likely others before long is the second lawsuit filed in Federal Court against the Cleveland County Commissioners and DSS. The first one, several years ago was settled by DSS paying Rev. Murphy $55,000 for the wrongdoings that DSS employees committed against Rev. Murphy by those DSS Employees under the direction of their DSS Supervisors. Very similar to another active Federal Lawsuit: Kline v. Cleveland County DSS and a slew of other DSS employees.

It seems that the County Commissioners would rather pay off lawsuits than discipline DSS Employees and DSS supervisors that do bad things. Very bad things.

This second Federal Lawsuit, Murphy v. Commissioners et al, arises directly because the Cleveland County Commissioners and DSS refuses to properly supervise and discipline, when necessary, the DSS Director and DSS supervisors and employees. AND practice discrimination and retaliation against anybody that tells on them. And, have done so for at least the last 25 years.

Another particular aspect of the Murphy and KIine lawsuits, as well as the recently settled, big payoff in the Willis lawsuit, is that I might have been and may be called upon to testify for the Plaintiffs in these lawsuits. As in Rev. Murphy's first lawsuit against the Commissioners and DSS is that I was in attendance at the County Commissioner's Meeting when Rev. Murphy informed the Commissioners of wrongdoing at CC DSS and the Commissioners refused to do anything to discipline the offending DSS Director, Supervisors and Employees before and after the lawsuit was filed and later after the lawsuit was settled paying Rev. Murphy because the employees had to be truthful under oath or risk years in prison on perjury charges. Something the employees had to do because there were tape recordings. Just like in the Willis Lawsuit that was paid off after the Health Department Director and Landfill manager were forced to resign.

In Rev. Murphy's second lawsuit against the Commissioners, DSS, et al ("et al" means and others), Rev Murphy has request documents from the Commissioners and DSS under the Freedom of Information Act as well as NC Public Records laws. The Commissioner's newly hired high dollar lawyer out of Charlotte, Stephanie Webster, has demanded that Rev. Murphy NOT contact directly with the Commissioner defendants. Rev. Murphy has twice refused to comply with Attorney Webster's demands as he (as does) myself believe it is unconstitutional

to demand that a citizen of the United States to be required to NOT contact an elected governmental officer in what would otherwise be for lawful and constitutional purposes. Rev. Murphy has also chided Attorney Webster for offering him unwanted, un-asked for and "free" legal advice.

Rev. Murphy has made an offer to settle his lawsuit for $125,000 if his offer to settle is accepted before he has to hire an attorney. Apparently, Rev. Murphy knows from his past experience with Cleveland County Commissioner's attorneys, that especially when they know they are wrong and have used up all their legal and illegal tricks and shenanigans that they will settle the case prior to having to admit that they did wrong or have a judge and a jury reach a verdict that they did wrong. They do this for two main reasons.
1. If they admit If they are found to have done wrong, they will likely lose their next election.
2. If they are convicted of a felony crime for a criminal act, (perjury is a felony crime, they will automatically lose any claim of "immunity" for their actions in office, and then any jury awards and fines would come out of their own pockets instead of out of the taxpayer's pockets.

My recommendations, based on my own knowledge of these cases, is that the Commissioners should jump on the opportunity and pay Rev. Murphy (and the Kline's too) for what they ask for and pay them immediately. My guess is the Commissioners will not accept this recommendation, even though their lawyer bills will likely exceed the offers to settle. This is either stupidity or incompetence. I don't know which, but with this Commissioner and School Board crowd, who can tell the difference???

Stay tuned folks, these lawsuits were all preventable but were not prevented. "Old dogs don't learn new tricks" is an old saying that applies here for the commissioners. Unfortunately, this could be said for the voters too. However, from the unpopular property tax increases that are soon coming out and

the next Commissioner Elections of commissioners only include Doug Bridges and Deb Hardin, shortsighted voters may only get rid of Bridges and Hardin and will forget Hutchins, Whetstine and Gordon by 2024.

On the other hand, Rev. Murphy is likely to be ready to hire an attorney and go all the way to the US Supreme Court if necessary. Either way, stay tunes folks.