

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

MICHAEL L. SHAKMAN, et al.,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	Case Number: 69 C 2145
v.)	
)	Magistrate Judge Schenkier
COOK COUNTY RECORDER OF)	
DEEDS, et al.,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

**SPECIAL REPORT OF THE SHAKMAN COMPLIANCE ADMINISTRATOR
FOR THE COOK COUNTY RECORDER OF DEEDS**

Cardelle B. Spangler, *Shakman* Compliance Administrator for the Cook County Recorder of Deeds (“RCA”)¹, by and through her attorney, Matthew D. Pryor, pursuant to Art. III.C of the Supplemental Relief Order for the Cook County Recorder of Deeds (“SRO”), submits this Special Report as follows:

I. Introduction

On June 1, 2016, the RCA filed her Twelfth Report to the Court (“Twelfth Report”) (Dkt. 4603) in which she discussed the Cook County Recorder of Deeds² Karen Yarbrough’s efforts to comply with the SRO. After the Twelfth Report, Plaintiffs filed a “Motion for Issuance of a Rule to Show Cause Why Certain Senior Staff in the Cook County Recorder of Deeds’ Office Should Not Be Held in Civil Contempt and for

¹ “RCA” hereinafter shall refer to the Recorder Compliance Administrator and/or her staff.

² The “Cook County Recorder of Deeds”, the “Recorder”, “ROD” and/or “Recorder’s Office” hereinafter shall refer to the Recorder, Karen Yarbrough, and/or her staff.

Related Relief” (the “Motion”). See Dkt. 4644 (filed July 29, 2016). In their Motion, Plaintiffs asked this Court to hold two current Recorder employees in civil contempt for, in part, “(1) conditioning any aspect of governmental employment on the basis of unlawful political discrimination [and] (2) failing to cooperate with the RCA, DOC and the OIIG by providing false information during investigations”. Dkt. 4644 at 8-11. Plaintiffs included in their filing a request for the Court to direct the RCA “to provide to Plaintiffs’ counsel, details concerning other instances in which Recorder’s Office employees made false statements to the RCA or DOC or discouraged Non-Exempt employees from reporting issues to the RCA or DOC.” Id. at 11.

The Court held its first status hearing on Plaintiffs’ Motion on August 16, 2016. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Court ordered that the RCA “is given leave to file a supplemental report providing any further explanation and/or elaboration that she may wish to offer on various items in her twelfth report that were alluded to but not specifically identified.” Dkt. 4682. The RCA submits this Special Report in accordance with the Court’s order.

II. Information Responsive to the Court’s Order

The RCA has addressed in her prior reports any significant issues of which she is aware concerning Recorder employees making false statements to or discouraging Non-Exempt employees from reporting issues to her or the DOC. The RCA, nevertheless, will take this opportunity to further detail one situation she alluded to but did not elaborate on in her Twelfth Report. On September 25, 2015, an Exempt Deputy Recorder became upset with her Non-Exempt Executive Assistant over the manner in which the employee responded to an email the Deputy Recorder sent the previous day. As the employee

attempted to explain her actions, the Deputy Recorder yelled “I’m sick of this sh*t!”, slammed her hands on the desk and loudly lamented her belief that a Non-Exempt employee likely would report her to the RCA. She exclaimed “now I’m going to get written up and have to explain myself to Cardelle [the RCA].” As discussed in the RCA’s Thirteenth Report, the DOC ultimately concluded that the Deputy Recorder violated the Recorder’s Courtesy Policy by swearing and yelling at her subordinate. Dkt. 4678 at 9.

This incident came on the heels of, among other incidents set forth in the Twelfth Report, Exempt Labor Counsel issuing his Non-Exempt Executive Assistant five Major Cause Infractions (each of which could have resulted in termination) in response to a complaint she lodged with the RCA; actions the DOC later concluded “were retaliatory for [the Executive Assistant] making statements to the RCA.” (DOC Incident Report 2015-09 at 9.) The RCA, therefore, was concerned that she was seeing a pattern of Exempt employees taking actions against or making statements to their Non-Exempt subordinate employees designed to discourage them from bringing potential issues to her attention.

The RCA has heard and continues to hear from employees that they also are concerned that their employment with the Recorder’s office will be adversely affected if the Recorder’s Office learns that they talk with her. The RCA has discussed her concerns with the Recorder, her Exempt Staff and the DOC and explained the SRO and Employment Plan’s clear prohibitions on retaliating against employees who report any violation of the SRO or Plan. (SRO at 34; Plan at 10.) The RCA will continue reporting on any such incidents in future reports.

III. Conclusion

The RCA will continue to serve this Court as the SRO directs and as this Court so requests.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cardelle B. Spangler
Recorder Compliance Administrator

By: /s/ Matthew D. Pryor

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