# In the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania Middle District

No. 159 MM 2017

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF PENNSYLVANIA et al., Petitioners,

v.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA *et al.*, Respondents.

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Review of Recommended Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law from the Commonwealth Court No. 261 M.D. 2017

APPLICATION OF RESPONDENTS MICHAEL C. TURZAI, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS SPEAKER OF THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND JOSEPH B. SCARNATI, III, IN HIS OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS PENNSYLVANIA SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE FOR A HEARING ON THEIR APPLICATION FOR DISQUALIFICATION OF JUSTICE DAVID WECHT AND FOR FULL DISCLOSURE BY JUSTICE CHRISTINE DONOHUE

BLANK ROME LLP

Brian S. Paszamant, PA #78410 paszamant@blankrome.com Jason A. Snyderman, PA #80239 snyderman@blankrome.com John P. Wixted, PA #309033 jwixted@blankrome.com One Logan Square

### CIPRIANI & WERNER, PC

Kathleen Gallagher, PA #37950 kgallagher@c-wlaw.com Carolyn Batz McGee, PA #208815 cmcgee@c-wlaw.com Jason R. McLean, PA #306835 jrmclean@c-wlaw.com Russell D. Giancola, PA #200058 130 N. 18th Street Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Phone: 215-569-5791 Facsimile: 215-832-5791

Attorneys for Respondent Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III, President Pro Tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate

# HOLTZMAN VOGEL JOSEFIAK TORCHINSKY PLLC

Jason Torchinsky (*pro hac vice*) jtorchinsky@hvjt.law Shawn Sheehy (*pro hac vice*) ssheehy@hvjt.law 45 North Hill Drive, Suite 100 Warrenton, Virginia 20186 Phone: 540-341-8808

Facsimile: 540-341-8809

Attorneys for Respondent Senator Joseph B. Scarnati, III, President Pro Tempore of the Pennsylvania Senate rgiancola@c-wlaw.com 650 Washington Road, Suite 700 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15228 Phone: 412-563-4978

Attorneys for Respondent Representative Michael C. Turzai, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives

#### BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP

E. Mark Braden (*pro hac vice*) mbraden@bakerlaw.com 1050 Connecticut Ave. NW Washington, DC 20036 Phone: 202-861-1504

Patrick T. Lewis (*pro hac vice*) plewis@bakerlaw.com
Key Tower
127 Public Square, Suite 2000
Cleveland, Ohio 44114
Phone: 216-621-0200

Robert J. Tucker (*pro hac vice*) rtucker@bakerlaw.com 200 Civic Center Drive, Suite 1200 Columbus, Ohio 43215 Phone: 614-462-2680

Attorneys for Respondent Representative Michael C. Turzai, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives Respondents, Michael C. Turzai and Joseph B. Scarnati, III ("Legislative Respondents"), by and through their undersigned counsel, respectfully submit this Application for a Hearing on their Application for Disqualification of Justice David Wecht, and for Full Disclosure by Justice Christine Donohue.

- 1. On Friday, February 2, 2018, Legislative Respondents filed their Application for Disqualification of Justice David Wecht, and for Full Disclosure by Justice Christine Donohue.
- 2. For the reasons explained therein, Legislative Respondents respectfully submit that Justice David Wecht is required to disqualify himself or, failing that, this Court has the duty to retroactively disqualify Justice Wecht from this case and invalidate his votes in the Court's Orders of November 9, 2017, January 22 and 26, 2018 based on the statements he made regarding the 2011 Plan and "partisan gerrymandering" while he was a candidate for this Court.
- 3. Legislative Respondents have further requested that Justice Donohue be required to disclose all information she believes the parties or their lawyers might reasonably consider relevant to a possible motion for disqualification pursuant to 207 Pa. Code 2.11(A)(5), including any statements regarding "gerrymandering" or the 2011 Plan, based on her statement at a candidate forum that, if elected, she would "end gerrymandering."

- 4. The Prothonotary of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ordered Petitioners, the remaining Respondents and Intervenors to file their Answer, or a No Answer Letter, to Legislative Respondents' Application by 10:30 a.m. on Monday, February 5, 2018.
- 5. Prior to this deadline to respond, Legislative Respondents are submitting this request for a hearing.
- 6. "A party seeking recusal bears the burden of producing evidence to establish bias, prejudice, or unfairness which raises a substantial doubt as to the jurist's ability to preside impartially." *Com. v. Watkins*, 108 A.3d 692, 734 (Pa. 2014) (citation omitted).
- 7. While Legislative Respondents submit that the evidence recited in their Application is sufficient to meet their burden to prove the appearance of impropriety (let alone actual bias) on the part of Justice Wecht, in the event Justice Wecht is inclined to not recuse himself <u>and</u> the Court is inclined to deny the Application, then Legislative Respondents submit that a hearing is appropriate to afford Legislative Respondents the opportunity to more fully explore and prove the evidence underlying their Application, as well as any additional evidence which may come to light prior to a hearing.
- 8. The issues raised as to Justice David Wecht's bias and Justice Christine Donohue's potential bias, based on the statements and comments detailed

in Legislative Respondents' Application, present a situation of significant importance regarding the partiality of the Supreme Court and Pennsylvanians' confidence in the jurists they have elected.

- 9. Legislative Respondents submit that a hearing would be in the public interest as a hearing would provide the requisite transparency to a matter of great public importance to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its voters.
- 10. As such, it cannot be disputed that the appearance of impartiality and full transparency by the Commonwealth's highest court is also of extreme importance.
- 11. With the presence of these serious issues bearing upon the impartiality and ultimate validity of this Court's Orders in this matter, Legislative Respondents submit that a hearing is appropriate and will benefit both the parties and the Court in its consideration and ultimate decision on the Application for Disqualification of Justice David Wecht, and for Full Disclosure by Justice Christine Donohue.

WHEREFORE, Legislative Respondents respectfully request that this Honorable Court grant this Application for a Hearing on their Application for Disqualification of Justice David Wecht, and for Full Disclosure by Justice Christine Donohue and schedule a hearing at the convenience of the Court's calendar.

Dated: February 4, 2018 Respectfully submitted,

## HOLTZMAN VOGEL JOSEFIAK TORCHINSKY PLLC

## CIPRIANI & WERNER, P.C.

/s/ Jason Torchinsky

Jason Torchinsky
jtorchinsky@hvjt.law
Shawn Sheehy
ssheehy@hvjt.law
45 North Hill Drive, Suite 100
Warrenton, Virginia 20186
Phone: 540-341-8808
Facsimile: 540-341-8809
Attorneys for Respondent
Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III,
President Pro Tempore of the
Pennsylvania Senate

/s/ Kathleen A. Gallagher

Kathleen A. Gallagher, PA #37950
kgallagher@c-wlaw.com
Carolyn Batz McGee, PA #208815
cmcgee@c-wlaw.com
Jason R. McLean, PA #306835
jrmclean@c-wlaw.com
Russell D. Giancola, PA #200058
rgiancola@c-wlaw.com
650 Washington Road, Suite 700
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15228
Phone: 412-563-4978
Attorneys for Respondent
Representative Michael C. Turzai,
Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of
Representatives

#### **BLANK ROME LLP**

#### BAKER & HOSTETLER LLP

/s/ Brian S. Paszamant

Brian S. Paszamant paszamant@blankrome.com

/s/ E. Mark Braden

E. Mark Braden (*pro hac vice*) mbraden@bakerlaw.com

Jason A. Snyderman

snyderman@blankrome.com

John P. Wixted

jwixted@blankrome.com

One Logan Square 130 N. 18th Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103

Phone: 215-569-5791 Facsimile: 215-832-5791 Attorneys for Respondent Senator Joseph B. Scarnati III, President Pro Tempore of the

Pennsylvania Senate

1050 Connecticut Ave., NW

**Suite** 1100

Washington, D.C. 20036-5403

Phone: 202-861-1504

Patrick T. Lewis (pro hac vice)

plewis@bakerlaw.com

127 Public Square, Suite 2000

Cleveland, Ohio 44114

Phone: 216-621-0200

Robert J. Tucker (pro hac vice)

rtucker@bakerlaw.com

200 Civic Center Drive, Suite 1200

Columbus, Ohio 43215 Phone: 614-462-2680

Attorneys for Respondent Representative

Michael C. Turzai,

Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of

Representatives