

June 18, 2015

To Starke County Government

I, Terry Turner, Starke County Service Officer, am filing a grievance indicating that on Monday, June 15, I was improperly replaced as the SCSVO by a 2-0 vote by the Starke County Commissioners, with which I believe, was without cause.

Starke County Commission President Kent Danford, in replacing me, stated that due to many complaints by community members and veterans he felt it was time to make a change.

The commissioners did not follow proper county handbook steps and procedure.

I was not given an oral warning about any improper actions, especially since Mr. Danford says there were "many " complaints. He has stated many times to me since he won the primary last May that he was going to replace me. I feel this action is due to a long standing grudge of Danford's, of which I cannot reason why. He never once indicated to me any individual action or inaction I made to a veteran that he received a complaint about. I will agree that due to the lengthy time for VA response to disability claims, or the sometimes restrictive rules to qualify for VA benefits, some veterans will not be eligible. But the service office is not the VA, we can only help the veteran improve his chances of getting benefits. Even stating that, I have never received any oral or written information from Mr. Danford about problems a veteran had with my office. I ask Mr. Danford to give me a list of community members and veterans who have complained about me.

Contrary to Mr. Danford, my office has been very successful helping veterans receive both disabilities and large monetary awards for benefits. I can provide a list of very happy veterans.

There are two complaints I have received from the commissioners. One was from Danford, that I dosed off in the office. That was due to problems I had from medicine I was prescribed from the VA for disabilities and health reasons. I have since corrected that by having my meds changed by the VA primary care provider.

The other complaint was from Commissioner Binkley, who commented at a meeting that no one can contact me because I did not have a county email address. That was totally incorrect. I have had a county email since the first week, and it is listed on my business card, along with the office phone number. Business cards have been available for months on the window of my office door and in businesses around the county. I have received many phone calls, as many as 50-70 per month. I have never received an email from a veteran.

The action by the commissioners violated all the handbook steps.

I have never received a written warning from an elected responsible official.

I have never been suspended without pay.

I have been improperly removed and replaced.

There are no disciplinary actions recorded, that I know of, in my personnel file.

Danford's accusations must be proven, or they, and his action in dismissing me, are slander.

My health and medical issues are a result of my service to my country, and as such, the refusal to accommodate is improper, and requires by law, reasonable accommodations. And those medical problems have been corrected through changes in my prescriptions.

Thus, my immediate discharge is a direct violation of the handbook. There is also the possibility that my removal and replacement is a civil rights violation related to age discrimination.

I request that Danford and the commissioners' change in service officer be reneged, and I be returned to my job along with any lost pay.

I also request Danford either resign, or issue a public apology. He has ran my name through the mud of his imagination, and damaged a 40-plus year reputation have have built through my journalistic career, and my last three years of successful veteran service officer .

Terry Turner

Starke County Veteran Service Officer

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