

April 29, 2021

By Email Only (editor@laclede-record.com)

Mr. Fines Massey
Editor
Laclede County Record
100 E. Commercial St.
Lebanon, Missouri 65536

RE: Meagan Howe

Dear Mr. Fines:

My law firm and I represent Meagan Howe in the current Supreme Court proceeding. Meagan Howe has represented many of your readers – her neighbors – for many years. Meagan has many current clients and former clients that are very happy with her services.

Prior to when an order for interim suspension was filed on Monday April 26th, Meagan was seeking only a hearing where she could present her evidence and an impartial panel to hear that evidence. We anticipated that, if Meagan could tell her side of the story, she would be able to continue practicing as a lawyer. Unfortunately, with the Court's order this week, Meagan has not been permitted to present evidence to a body that is able to evaluate Meagan's evidence countering the allegations.

We ask that you and your readers understand that an order of interim suspension is not a finding of guilt for any allegations of professional misconduct, but rather a finding of probable cause of potential misconduct sufficient for an interim suspension pending further proceedings.

Therefore, the allegations against Ms. Howe are just that, allegations. Meagan strongly disagrees with the vast majority of the accusations, and has submitted documents that disprove many of the claims against her. This includes that the Missouri Lawyers Assistance Program performed an assessment on Meagan and found she had no problems with alcohol use or abuse.

Furthermore, your readers should understand that the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel did not have final answers from Meagan regarding the complaints made within one week of each during August of 2020, before Disciplinary Counsel requested an Interim Suspension. Meagan was delayed in filing those responses because she had been the victim of a traumatic home

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burglary that occurred around the time her responses were due. The burglary led Meagan to seek help. She was diagnosed with ADHD as well as PTSD, and began taking medication for those conditions. Meagan's diagnoses were raised in her answer to the court only to explain her delay in responding to the complaints, not for any other reason.

Last year was a very tough year for Meagan. Like many parents, Meagan had to deal with an abrupt closure of her daughter's childcare due to the COVID pandemic. This disrupted Meagan's ability to work for her clients, and also to respond to the Disciplinary Counsel's letters. Meagan does not claim to be perfect. She realizes that she became disorganized and behind in some aspects of her practice, including in responding to the Disciplinary Counsel. However, Meagan and I both believe Meagan has not caused any significant harm to any client, and that the vast majority of her clients have been satisfied with Meagan's work and the representation they received.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Downey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "D".

Michael P. Downey

Counsel for Meagan Howe