



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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West Palm Beach—The Florida Civil Rights Coalition, P.L.L.C. has initiated civil actions on behalf of former Florida Atlantic University (“FAU”) Professor James Tracy against four FAU law enforcement officers for illegally accessing Tracy’s driver’s license information in 2015 and 2016.

The lawsuits allege that FAU’s current and former law enforcement personnel, Rickey Leon Bethel Jr. [Case No. 9:19-cv-81189], Tracy Clark Haynie [Case No. 9:19-cv-81190], Amy Grande [Case No. 9:19-cv-81191] and Gia Shaw [Case No. 9:19-cv-81193] violated the Drivers License Privacy Protection Act (“DPPA”), a federal law with criminal and civil penalties against individuals who obtain, disclose or use drivers’ license information without an authorized purpose or consent.

Public records show Bethel, Haynie, Grande and Shaw accessed Tracy’s confidential personal information using the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles’ Driver and Vehicle Information Database, also known as “DAVID.” The inquiries began the morning of December 17, 2015, less than two days after FAU officials announced termination proceedings against the tenured communications professor. The records reveal Bethel, Haynie, Grande and Shaw combined for twenty six (26) unlawful DAVID inquiries to obtain Tracy’s confidential personal information.

The four lawsuits demand jury trials and request liquidated damages under the DPPA, compensatory and punitive damages, attorneys’ fees, court costs and injunctions against Bethel, Haynie, Grande and Shaw and anyone acting in concert with them.

Dr. Tracy was hired by FAU as a tenure-track faculty member in 2002 and awarded tenure in 2008. Following Tracy’s unlawful termination in 2016, the Florida Civil Rights Coalition filed a civil rights lawsuit [Case No. 9:16-cv-80655] on Tracy’s behalf against FAU and various officials who conspired to terminate Tracy in retaliation for his constitutionally protected speech. After a federal jury returned a verdict favoring FAU in 2017, Tracy appealed. The case [Case No. 18-10173] is presently scheduled for oral argument before the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit in Atlanta, Georgia on September 19, 2019.

Inquires may be directed to info@floridacivilrights.org.

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