



PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: LAWRENCE ROBERT
323-236-9992

MANLY, STEWART & FINALDI CLIENTS JAMIE DANTZSCHER AND RACHAEL DENHOLLANDER SPEAK OUT AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO RESTRAIN THEIR RIGHT TO SPEAK PUBLICLY ABOUT THEIR ALLEGED SEXUAL ABUSE

Alleged sex abuse victims of Dr. Nassar challenge second gag order issued by Ingham County Circuit Judge Rosemarie Aquilina in Federal District Court.

Irvine, California - Alleged sexual assault victims of Dr. Larry Nassar are asking United States District Court Judge Janet Neff to invalidate successive gag orders issued by Ingham County Circuit Judge Rosemarie Aquilina and guarantee their first amendment rights to free speech.

Plaintiffs include Jamie Dantzschler, Rachael Denhollander, Lindsey Lemke and more than 80 alleged victims of sexual abuse by Lawrence Gerard Nassar in various civil actions, as well as the law firms that represent the victims.

On March 29, Judge Aquilina issued a gag order that was challenged in Federal District Court by the plaintiffs.

Their lawsuit argued that the victims and their attorneys were denied notice and an opportunity to be heard before the gag order was issued. It further argued that the gag order is so broad and vague as to prevent victims from speaking to law enforcement, legislative bodies, therapists, family and friends about their abuse. The gag order was issued the day after plaintiff Jamie Dantzschler, an Olympic medalist, and other alleged Nassar victims received national media coverage for testifying before the United States Senate Judiciary Committee in support of bipartisan legislation to strengthen reporting requirements for child sexual abuse in Olympic sports.

United States District Judge Janet T. Neff issued a temporary restraining order on April 7, 2017 prohibiting enforcement of the first gag order on constitutional grounds.

Judge Aquilina rescinded her first gag order on April 12, 2017 and issued a second gag order which is now being challenged by Dr. Nassar's alleged victims and their attorneys. [Click here for order.](#)

Judge Neff has ordered Judge Aquilina and Dr. Nassar to respond to the challenge no later than May 2.

Reacting to the latest gag order, Jamie Dantzscher said, “The order restricts my right to speak along with the other victims but it allows those at Michigan State University and USA Gymnastics to speak publicly and promote themselves and their half-truths about Dr. Nassar. I will have to hire an attorney in Michigan, and fly or drive, at my own expense, more than two thousand miles to Michigan. Then, I will have to file a brief and appear before a judge in the presence of my childhood doctor, who sexually assaulted me under the guise of medical treatment, and his hostile lawyers, then beg to get their collective permission to talk about the fact that Dr. Larry Nassar repeatedly molested me throughout my childhood, even when I was competing at the Olympic Games for our country. Apparently, that would be my obligation, and that of every other victim of Dr. Nassar under the new gag order.”

“Even more frightening, if I do speak out in any public place, I could be arrested and held in contempt of court by Judge Aquilina,” Dantzscher said.

Rachael Denhollander, the first gymnast to file a criminal complaint against Dr. Nassar said, “This new order is equally disturbing. It states that the restriction on my speech will remain in effect until the Criminal Case has ended and all direct appeals have concluded. As such, it could be several years – potentially, even over a decade – before I am able to speak freely about my case without fear of violating the Court’s order. Because there is no way of knowing for how many years my freedom of speech will be restricted by this order, the order is extremely overbroad and oppressive.

Sexual assault victims need to know that their rights and freedoms will be protected if they participate in the criminal process to bring their abuser to justice. No one should be required to become revictimized and relinquish fundamental liberties to participate in our judicial system.

17 years ago Larry Nassar’s ability to control the narrative kept me from fighting back to defend my body. And in an effort to bring him to justice, the court is requiring me to relinquish another fundamental right – my right to a voice. 17 years ago I could not defend myself. Today I can.”

Manly, Stewart & Finaldi is California’s leading law firm representing child victims of sexual abuse. The firm has represented more than 150 victims of clergy sexual abuse in California and hundreds of others throughout the United States. The firm also represented plaintiffs in the \$140,000,000 settlement against LAUSD in the Miramonte case, the largest sex abuse settlement against a School District in the US.