

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tom Rask

October 11, 2016

503.222.3531

Judge Advances Rep. Wingard Lawsuit Against Oregon Family Council and Oregon Right to Life

Court Agrees Defamation & False Statement Case Has Merit

Portland, OR -- A Multnomah County judge today refused to block a lawsuit brought by former State Representative Matt Wingard against the Oregon Family Council, Oregon Right to Life and former State Senator Charles Starr.

Citing the arguments presented at a September 7th hearing, the court found enough evidence of wrongdoing to rule that Wingard's lawsuit should go forward. In her five-page decision, Circuit Court Judge Adrienne C. Nelson stated "that, as a matter of law, Plaintiff has sufficiently established a *prima facie* that Defendants violated ORS 260.532." Judge Nelson further stated that "the Court determines that Plaintiff satisfied the provision outlined in ORS 31.150(3) by submitting substantial evidence in the form of pleadings and supporting affidavits to establish his claim for defamation."

The judge rejected every argument made by lawyers for the defendants.

Representative Wingard issued the following statement in reaction to the court decision:

"My family and I are very pleased with Judge Nelson's decision. The Court agreed my case has merit. I have said from the very beginning that my relationship with Ms. Berrier was entirely consensual and that she lied about me. The Oregon Family Council, Oregon Right to Life and Mr. Starr repeated these lies to the voters of House District 26 during the May 2016 primary race and I am determined to hold them accountable.

I want to thank everyone who has supported me in my fight for justice and I look forward to setting the record straight when we go to trial."

Wingard is suing the Oregon Family Council, Oregon Right to Life, Charles Starr and others for defamation and violation of ORS 260.532 (False publication relating to candidate or measure). The case number is: 16CV18238