long island business news | libn.com

Officer files $100 million lawsuit against Nassau County

by Michael H. Samuels

Published: August 21st, 2009

A Nassau County Sheriff's officer has filed a $100 million lawsuit against the county for not allowing him to take time off to care for his sick wife and child.

Officer Jeff Colletti is claiming that his civil rights were violated when he was denied a leave of absence to care for his wife, who was suffering from a severe and debilitating case of postpartum depression, and their newborn child, Saverio Paul, said his attorney, Paul J. Margiotta of The Margiotta Law Firm in Bay Shore.

Colletti is arguing that he should have been entitled to take time off under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act.

According to the lawsuit, Colletti, a 20-year veteran, requested leave on April 1, 2008 - pursuant to the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Collective Bargaining Agreement between Nassau County and the Sheriff Officers Association of Nassau County. David Kondrup, acting deputy undersheriff of the Nassau County Sheriff's Department, denied Colletti's request.

On April 30, 2008, Michael F. Adams, president of the Sheriff Officers Association, appealed to Kondrup to reconsider his denial and grant Colletti's request. His appeal met with no response.

"The county knowingly violated my client's civil and constitutional rights when they denied his request to take time off to be by his wife's side and care for his infant child," Margiotta said in a statement. "Officer Jeff Colletti has served on the force for 20 years and has a spotless record. It is a tragedy to do something like this to a fine law enforcement official."

Colletti previously had been put on "line of duty injury" status following an injury to his right Achilles tendon suffered responding to an emergency situation in Sept. 2006.

Colletti was cleared of injury duty in Sept. 2007 after having surgery to get the injury corrected and his wife, Christine, gave birth in March 2008. About a month later, Christine Colletti experienced postpartum depression and was admitted to John J. Mather Hospital on May 11, 2008 as a result of the condition.

Complete URL: **http://libn.com/blog/2009/08/21/officer-files-100-million-lawsuit-against-nassau-county/**