

FinallyDebtFree, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 5:52:13 AM)

Sounds like someone has something to hide.

Tony G, Tulsa (1/28/2010 5:58:09 AM)

I can NOT see his case for immunity. As a public servant, he should be willing and open for the truth to come out in this. This way--he does--look like he has something to hide.

Just1Man, (1/28/2010 7:08:19 AM)

All the more reason to get him on the stand now if you ask me.

my view, Sand Springs (1/28/2010 7:39:47 AM)

I believe that immunity is in the state constitution and has been there for sometime. It pertains to when the legislature is in session. They can postpone the trial until after May he should then testify. Ritze, won't get much support on this because of his stance on the 10 commandment monument. Some people can't separate one policy from another.

2ndjoyce, BA (1/28/2010 8:37:56 AM)

The plot thickens.

Slatz, Tulsa (1/28/2010 8:54:37 AM)

Sure, as long as we can have immunity from the effects of his stupid bills.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 9:02:08 AM)

You said it, 2ndjoyce. What does Ritze need protection from? Why, if he was doing his duty as a legislator and investigating an issue that is relevant to his role as a legislator, would he be unwilling to testify and/or provide any documentation associated with the issue? This would seem to be a prime opportunity to bolster the claims of his friend the ex-superintendent. If what he and the plaintiff were doing was above-board, as the plaintiff claims, nothing Ritze could provide would be damaging to him. It could only help him. Yet Ritze is claiming that his involvement is privileged. In fact, he goes so far as to say that even if he did something illegal in the course of his "investigation", he is protected from being sued AND from being called as a witness in someone else's lawsuit. Why would he need to bring this up? Has he done something illegal in relation to Sisney's claims? If he has done something illegal, or that could look bad to his constituents, that could explain his reluctance to testify. But if our representative is doing things that are illegal, and trying to excuse these actions by saying they fall under the protection of his role as legislator, isn't that something we should be able to consider when deciding whether we want him to represent us? In the Motion, Ritze is saying that it is within his role as a legislator to investigate issues such as BA's school district issues because it is possible that legislative action may need to be taken - laws made or changed - to deal with the issues. It may or may not be deemed necessary to take legislative action as a result of the investigation. He is saying that he took on the investigation into the District's payments to AA and sick leave payments in this capacity, and that since it is within the "legitimate sphere of legislative activity", any information related to it is confidential. He further says that "neither his motives, nor the results of his investigation, may be 'questioned in any other place', including by the defendants in this matter". I do not believe Ritze's defense is legitimate, and here is why. (next post...)

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 9:02:28 AM)

...continued... I do not believe Ritze's defense is legitimate, and here is why. 1) The trail ends at the media. We know that Sisney did not report his suspected corruption to any investigative authority until 8 months after he

supposedly discovered it. Ritze was given information by the ex-super on the suspected illegal payments to AA, and the suspected illegal sick payments. Ritze's contention is that it was for him to investigate the situation, with the goal of possibly improving the laws of Oklahoma. What did he do with this information? Nothing, apparently, except hand it over to Reynolds, who issued a press release. If what the ex-super gave Ritze was truly relevant evidence of corruption within the school district, this would have been required to support the ex-super's federal and district lawsuits. However, the ex-super did not list this evidence in his exhibit lists for either lawsuit, just as he did not list the evidence he gave to the police (now in the hands of the OSBI). (It should be noted that the board members DID include the evidence in the hands of the OSBI.) Nothing was done with this "evidence" except feeding the sick leave non-issue to the press, in a move designed to further the ex-super's PR campaign against the school district. As with all of the ex-super's accusations, the trail ends at the media. He has utterly failed to follow up with any actual evidence, and has in fact admitted that he has no evidence that would support his claim of bias among the 3 board members. 2) The sick pay issue was long dead before the ex-super provided this information to Ritze. It was discontinued years ago. Not only that, but it is completely irrelevant to the alleged corruption Sisney discovered. There is absolutely nothing to investigate here. It was brought up only in an attempt to embarrass Broken Arrow. 3) Ritze contends that his motives may not be questioned. I believe they should be questioned, because Ritze has made it clear that he supported the ex-super. Not only did he sign the petition calling for the removal of the 3 board members, but he also circulated it for signatures. Oddly, he then attempted to notarize his own signature. The rules really are different for politicians, aren't they?

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 9:15:18 AM)

Ritze is listed as a witness for the plaintiff. The defendant can't even depose a witness?

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 9:29:12 AM)

More information about the BA school board controversy and the ex-super's lawsuits is available on the website associated with my name...click on the 612. Read the 42 Questions that suggest the ex-super was NOT railroaded, and follow the progress of his federal lawsuit, which he tried to get dismissed. The school district - the DEFENDANT - objected to the dismissal! The district had to file 3 Motions to compel: one to get the ex-super to itemize his damages; one to get the ex-super to provide the evidence he has been claiming to have over the past year-and-a-half; and one to get the ex-super to show up at his rescheduled deposition, after being a no-show for the originally scheduled deposition. The ex-super, in his deposition, admitted that he has NO evidence that shows bias on the part of the board members. Read the emails between the ex-super and his attorney brother, where the brother gives him advice on how to handle the "menopausal geniuses on the board".

Jolie2, (1/28/2010 9:42:20 AM)

Shouldn't the laws apply to the lawmakers? Ritze is proving to me with his latest actions that all his bluster about moral behavior is just political posturing. If Ritze has nothing to hide, he should be willing and grateful for the opportunity to testify in court. What are you hiding, Mike Ritze?

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 9:48:01 AM)

The Motion will be available later today on the website associated with my profile. I will also include scans of the petition pages that show that Ritze collected signatures in support of the ex-super, on the petition to remove the 3 board members who voted to dismiss him. The page where Ritze attempted to notarize his own signature is included. I do not believe there was any investigation done by Ritze. But if there was, it certainly seems unlikely that it would be unbiased, given his obvious support of the ex-super.

horatio, BROKEN ARROW (1/28/2010 10:13:52 AM)

He was immaculately dressed in a suit and tie, hair combed back and in perfect place, fingernails recently manicured and a spit shine on his shoes. Confidently he stood before the judge who asked him to explain why he did not want to testify. "Your honor," he boldly said with self assurance, "I am a State legislator so I don't have to and you can't make me. So there." He quickly stuck his tongue out at the judge, threw his nose in the air and left the court room singing Sinatra's classic "My way" way off key.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 11:59:40 AM)

Ritze is claiming legislative immunity to avoid having to provide information, emails, and testimony from August 2008. But wait - he wasn't sworn in until November 2008! He could not have "investigated" anything in a legislative capacity before he was an elected official! He certainly would not have any immunity for any of his actions before he was sworn in. Even if he was an elected official during this timeframe, his claim of immunity is still questionable. "Legislative immunity" is not intended to allow legislators to excuse actions that are unrelated to their legislative role. In fact, the cases in the Motion to Quash all involve directly suing the legislator involved, for actions taken in his role as a legislator, as opposed to requiring a legislator to testify in another case on matters unrelated to law-making (that occurred before he was sworn in).

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 12:09:36 PM)

I am curious as to how Ritze will explain how it was appropriate for a member of the legislative branch to circulate a petition for the express purpose of influencing a ruling by the judicial branch. If, on the other hand, he circulated this petition before he was sworn in, it would not be covered by immunity. Ritze was sworn in on November 18, 2008. Lare called for the petitions to be turned in on November 21, 2008. It seems very likely that Ritze was circulating the petition before he was sworn in.

Clarion, Tulsa (1/28/2010 12:37:02 PM)

Mr. Ritze has called-in many times on a local gab-fest radio show. His very self-centeredness and love affair with himself were evident, and he almost always denigrated other people. This really turned me off. I am not a resident of BA, so will not comment on that mess there. But his refusal to testify doesn't surprise me one bit.

Jolie2, (1/28/2010 1:00:13 PM)

It's a big day for Mike Ritze today. The Tulsa Beacon has an article published Jan. 28 announcing that he will run for a second term. More than half of the article covers Ritze's involvement with his church and ministry. Strangely enough [sarcasm], no mention of this legal issue or Ritze's connection to Sisney and his lawsuit is made in the article. The Beacon ran very favorable articles about Sisney during the BA controversy, as well. I think some journalists should change their job title to public relations spokesperson, judging by how they 'report' the news.

Jolie2, (1/28/2010 1:03:13 PM)

Correction to my last post. The Beacon article has two separate topics in one article but is not cleared marked as such. The second half is not related to Ritze at all, but covers news about New Prophet Watch Ministry. My apologies for the error.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 1:34:32 PM)

There is a new Motion in the federal case...see the website associated with my profile.

golfer girl, (1/28/2010 5:44:18 PM)

Where's the legislation he was investigating? I don't know anything about this immunity claim... but to me, that seems the cart before the horse. Any illegal activity could then be protected under investigation for "supposed"

legislation? Here is another problem with his immunity claim: He was asked to go to the meeting. He wanted to talk with Sisney before the meeting - Aug 11th. He went to the meeting - Aug 12th. Something about that cooperation led Lee Sisney to advise Jim on August 16th to share all with Ritze because "he can do and say things to people you cannot." Doing things Too Clandestine for Jim to do for himself does not qualify as legislation. Here's the question: What was he asked to do? What did he offer to do? What was the purpose? And... did he do it? How does that piece of it have anything to do with even supposed legislation? BTW, Be alarmed.... This is the man who is sponsoring the bill for legislators to have the power to impeach judges when he views their findings as negligent. He does think he's above the law! Think about that people! What if in this case his actions/motions were being considered by a judge that he had the power to raise impeachment against. That's why the law against legislative impeachment of judges ended LONG LONG ago. Politicians aren't elected for JUDICIAL REVIEW! Sure, not all judicial decisions seem "perfect" but they still are FAR MORE IMPARTIAL than politicians with axes to grind, friends to favor (obvious here) and elections to win.

Thunder196, Tulsa (1/28/2010 6:03:43 PM)

What chapter are we up to now. I am sure there will be more to come. Kinda like a soap opera, never ends.

rockfan, broken arrow (1/28/2010 6:15:30 PM)

Lots of monkey business going on. I doubt that anyone comes out smelling like a rose.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 6:16:32 PM)

The Motion to Quash is posted on the website associated with my profile...click on the 612.

FUTURE WORLD, Tulsa (1/28/2010 6:20:51 PM)

This should become a joint venture between the State Department of Education and the Attorney Generals office.

golfer girl, (1/28/2010 7:09:59 PM)

Having completely read Ritze's motion to squash: (1) The immunity is for "purely legislative activities" and not for nongermane "political matters." How is that determined? (2) In all cases cited in Ritze's motion to suppress, legislative proceedings were on-going and the status of "purely legislative activity" is corroborated by official hearings and reports, including in the Chapman case to which he so closely compares himself. In Chapman the investigation stems from the General Accounting Office - not a single legislator's office. In not a single case cited in Ritze motion did a legislator claim and receive immunity for his own home-grown "investigation." And nowhere in it does it claim Ritze was acting as part of a corroborating legislative process. I would hope he at least has to prove the "purity" of his legislative activity before allowed the immunity.

golfer girl, (1/28/2010 7:24:29 PM)

Maybe Ritze will start an investigation into Sisney's misuse of power and probably money. Yeah, right.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 7:39:48 PM)

golfer girl, also notice that Ritze was not sworn in until November 21 - well after the August events that he took part in, including circulating Lare's petition to remove the board members.

612, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 7:43:05 PM)

Correction - Ritze was sworn in on November 18. The petition-circulating took place up until November 21, when Lare called for the signed petitions.

lovestoteach, Broken Arrow (1/28/2010 10:43:05 PM)

Dr. Ritze's motives and actions do need to be questioned. He needs to explain his part in passing on suspiciously obtained information to Rep. Reynolds for political purposes. The purpose was to cast aspersions on a school board candidate and the acting superintendent. Information about salaries of public employees is public information but that information must be obtained through an open records request. When asked about how Rep. Reynolds got the information for his press release since there had not been a formal request for that information, Ritze denied any knowledge. Maybe he should read the commandment about bearing a false witness. Maybe he thinks that his elected position has also placed him above God's law. He doesn't look good in this picture.

612, Broken Arrow (1/29/2010 1:17:49 AM)

Well said, lovestoteach. I had not heard about Ritze's denial of any knowledge regarding how Reynolds got the information without a formal open records request...thanks. I do not believe that Ritze's actions regarding the sick pay issue or any correspondence regarding the controversy are covered under legislative immunity. We will see what the judge thinks.