

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stephenson County State's Attorney's Office Announces Resolution in Case Involving Threats to Public Official

Freeport, Illinois – Stephenson County State's Attorney Carl Larson announced today that Joseph Haggerty has entered a guilty plea in connection with emails sent to Illinois State Senator Andrew Chesney that contained threats.

Haggerty pleaded guilty to Attempt Threatening a Public Official. As part of the resolution of the case, Haggerty was sentenced to 24 months of probation, with 60 days of stayed jail, in order to avoid serving this jail time he will be required to complete both a drug and alcohol evaluation and a mental health evaluation, and to follow through with any recommended treatment.

Haggerty has already served 15 days in jail and was released to a treatment facility, where he successfully completed a course of treatment. He also submitted a written letter of apology as part of this resolution.

“This case involved threats directed at an elected public official,” Larson said. “Threats against public servants are not protected speech and they will be taken seriously. This resolution reflects the defendant's accountability for his actions, while also providing a structured path for continued treatment and supervision to reduce the risk of future harm.”

As an additional condition of the sentence, Haggerty has been ordered to have no contact with Senator Chesney, the Senator's family, or the Senator's staff.

Larson noted that the resolution in this matter was consistent with the wishes of the victim, and balanced the goals of accountability, public safety, and meaningful rehabilitation.

“This agreement ensures the defendant will remain under the supervision of a probation officer for the next two years, is prohibited from contacting the victim and those close to him, and is required to obtain further evaluation and follow any recommended treatment,” Larson said. “That combination promotes safety, responsibility, and long-term stability.”

The Stephenson County State's Attorney's Office thanks law enforcement and all parties involved for their work in bringing this matter to resolution.

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