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Stafford Supervisor Paul Milde's Law Violations More Extensive, More Recent, Than Previously Revealed

One felony conviction, seven misdemeanor convictions, 22 judgments and liens for unpaid bills and taxes, \$8,211 in penalties and interest for late payment of Stafford County real estate property taxes, and a 2006 lawsuit for \$157,000 in unpaid debt — not to mention more than a dozen traffic violations. That's a partial tally of criminal convictions and unpaid bills accumulated by Stafford's Aquia Supervisor Paul Milde between 1986 and 2009. This record of unlawful behavior is far more extensive than what has been previously revealed and it includes a pattern of financial irresponsibility that continued after Milde took office as Aquia Supervisor.

The new information comes from public documents acquired and released by the campaign of Aquia's Independent candidate, Paul Ortiz, who has focused on open government, "clean money" election reform, and restoring integrity to the office of Supervisor.

"These are public records available to anyone who asks for them," Mr. Ortiz said, "but no one's ever bothered to check before. These documents show that Mr. Milde's stories about his criminal record just don't add up and they paint a disturbing picture of repeated unlawful behavior and fiscal irresponsibility." Ortiz also noted that since this was a partial review of the records, Milde's offenses may well be even more extensive.

Four years ago, voters were unaware of Paul Milde's criminal record when he won the Republican nomination. Milde's 1986 felony conviction for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute and his 1995 conviction for a burglary related offense came to public light during the general election campaign. These revelations divided the Republican Party ([Stafford GOP Divided Over Role of Candidate's Criminal Record](#), *Washington Post*, 9/15/2005). Some members felt that Milde had not been up front about his past, others thought the nature of his crimes was troubling ([Milde addresses his '86 drug](#)

[conviction](#), *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, 9/16/2005; [Topsy turvey supervisor race jars Stafford voters](#), *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, 10/19/2005).

Milde claimed he had changed, and that by raising issues from his past his opponent was using smear tactics ([Milde: It's a smear](#), *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, 11/3/2005). He held on to win the election, in part by spending far more on his campaign—over \$100,000—than any candidate ever has for a Stafford County office. (In recent years, expenditures by candidates for the Supervisors' office have typically totaled no more than \$20,000—and are often less than half of that.)

Back then, Milde claimed that his misdeeds were limited to a troubled period of his life when he struggled with drug addiction. In a contrite letter to voters (11/4/2005) he claimed to have turned his life around and to now have a successful business.

The newly released legal documents tell a very different story.

Paul Milde's legal troubles as an adult did indeed begin in 1986 with his felony drug conviction for possession of cocaine with intent to distribute, which resulted in a six year sentence—one year in the state penitentiary and five years on supervised probation. (The records of any legal troubles Milde might have had as a minor are not publicly available.)

Milde's second felony charge, for possession of a weapon as a convicted felon, occurred in 1993 shortly after the end of his probation; court documents are no longer available for that charge and the exact nature of the court disposition of *other* is unknown.

A year later, he was arrested and charged with three felonies for (1) attempted statutory burglary, (2) possession of burglary tools, and (3) possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. A plea bargain resulted in a misdemeanor burglary conviction for which he served brief jail time and another year of probation.

Here is where Milde's claims and the legal record diverge. Rather than end with those early convictions, as Milde's past statements have suggested, his record of legal troubles continues for another 15 years, right up to the penalties and interest he paid in 2009 for late payment of Stafford County real estate property taxes.

Court records reveal:

- Seven misdemeanor convictions from 1994 to 2000. These include reckless driving, rail fare evasion, and possession of a suspended operator's license, as well as the already-known burglary conviction.
- Eleven IRS liens between 1994 and 2007, ranging in amounts from \$573 to \$17,228 for unpaid federal taxes totaling \$75,116, assessed against both Paul Milde (individually) and his two companies (Closet Interiors and Closet Interiors Plus). These liens are entered after the IRS has made demands for payment and the taxes remain unpaid. \$23,943 of the liens was assessed against Milde's company in 2007—after he had been in office for over a year. At least six of these liens were released after *satisfaction* (presumably payment).

- Six court judgments from 1994 to 2001 against Milde individually and his businesses for unpaid debts which ranged in value from \$461 to \$5,168. These judgments are entered when a judge has determined that a debtor owes money to a creditor and has not responded to requests for payment. At least four of these liens were released after payment.
- A \$157,000 lawsuit in 2006 (Milde's first year in office) against Milde individually and his business McMillion and Milde, LLC (of which he is the only member), now known as Milde LLC. In court documents, Milde admits to owing \$140,000 but disputes the remaining \$17,000. The court case is still open in Stafford Circuit Court.
- Five mechanics liens in 2006 (Milde's first year in office), ranging in value from \$1,990 to \$53,739 and totaling \$114, 221. These liens are usually recorded against a property by contractors or subcontractors who have not been paid for material or services rendered to that property. All of these liens were entered against Milde's Garrison Woods Drive condominium properties (owned by Milde through his development company, McMillion & Milde, LLC) for work done on that development. Four of these liens were released after payment.
- At least five traffic violations for speeding. While relatively minor, these speeding violations coupled with the more serious misdemeanor reckless driving conviction and three misdemeanor speeding convictions perhaps shed light on an incident that occurred after Mr. Milde took office. In 2007, he flipped over his SUV when he drove it off the road and down a steep embankment on a curved stretch of Brooke Road. At the time, Milde claimed a second car was to blame for his accident; no other vehicle was ever found ([Stafford supervisor flips SUV over bank](#), *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*, 5/12/2007).

A review of County tax records indicates an equally irresponsible pattern of financial mismanagement by Mr. Milde. The County assesses two types of property taxes: real estate property taxes (what most people just call "property taxes"), and personal property taxes (on property such as boats or cars).

- For three of his last four years on the Board of Supervisor, Milde failed to pay his County real estate property taxes on time, accumulating thousands of dollars in penalties and interest for late payments.
- In 2004, Milde purchased an investment property on Jefferson Davis Highway. During three years of ownership, he never paid the property taxes on time. In fact, he only paid taxes two years after they were due, perhaps in order to avoid the County auctioning the property to pay off the taxes. When Milde sold the property less than a year ago in December 2008, he owed over \$7,000 in back taxes, penalties and interest.
- Since purchasing in April 2004 the property where he now lives, Milde has been late paying his real estate property taxes two times, failing to make payments for 6 months to more than a year after the taxes were due.
- Between 2002 and 2009, Milde (through his company McMillion & Milde, LLC) developed a parcel of land into condominiums. Property taxes on the original parcel and subsequently built condominium units were rarely paid on time. For

example, between 2007 and 2009 Milde was late paying property taxes at least 37 times on at least seven different parcels.

- Between 1994 and 2009, Milde was late at least 22 times paying his personal property taxes to Stafford County, sometimes not paying his taxes until years later. It appears that he never paid the County \$1,217.05 for personal property taxes due in 1993 and 1994.

The lengthy legal record contradicts one of Paul Milde's major assertions in his campaign literature: that he is a "successful businessman." Though that phrase can be interpreted in a variety of ways, the repeated non-payment of taxes and non-payment of debt by his various companies would seem to run counter to any reasonable definition of a successfully run business.

As a private citizen, Milde's continuing tax and debt troubles would not normally be the stuff of public inquiry. But by placing his business credentials at the core of his campaign, and seeking to hold a public office that helps establish tax rates for citizens and determines how taxpayer dollars are spent, Milde's ironic failure to pay his own taxes on time seems inappropriate, at the very least. This is especially true for his repeatedly late payment of local real estate property taxes, which resulted in the issuance of thousands of dollars in penalties and late fees between 2002 and 2009. For taxpayers, Mr. Milde's financial mismanagement raises questions about his competence to handle fiscal matters, a central part of his job as Supervisor.

Referring to Milde's original election bid four years ago, Paul Ortiz asked, "How can someone spend nearly \$90,000 of his own money to get elected while not paying his taxes? And then, once in office, he helped set tax rates for everyone else but didn't bother to pay his own taxes on time? That's just irresponsible."

Ortiz, a 30-year retired marine whose work experience in the US Marine Corps included successfully managing a billion-dollar budget, returned to a major campaign theme, concluding, "On November 3, voters have a chance to clean house in the Aquia District, bring in some fiscal responsibility to protect taxpayers, and restore integrity to the office of Supervisor."