



PORTAGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Bruce D. Zuchowski

NEWS RELEASE

For the last eighteen months, allegations of inmate abuse wrongfully diminished public confidence in the Portage County Sheriff's Office and besmirched the reputations of elected officials and hard-working corrections officers and staff. In late-2019, the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the FBI undertook an independent and comprehensive investigation into twenty-three allegations of inmate abuse and mistreatment at the Portage County jail. The investigators found that all but one complaint were wholly fabricated or greatly exaggerated accounts of minor or unrelated incidents.

The ringleader behind many of these allegations, and the media storm that ensued, was former Portage County jail inmate, Brett M. McClafferty. In September 2019, while he was incarcerated at the Lake Erie Correctional Institution, McClafferty filed a widely-publicized \$10.7 million civil suit against the Portage County Board of Commissioners, the former Portage County Sheriff, David Doak, and several Sheriff's Office employees alleging that he had been the victim of excessive force and torture. Today we are pleased to announce that the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed McClafferty's lawsuit with prejudice, finding "clear and convincing evidence that [McClafferty] filed the case at bar in bad faith and for improper purposes."

I would like to extend my appreciation to the individuals who worked tirelessly to see through the legal proceedings attached to this case. The transparency that was displayed throughout our office is highly commendable and solidifies the superior quality of our staff.

Respectfully,

Bruce D. Zuchowski
Portage County Sheriff