



July 1, 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**RE: Liberty Law Group Statement Regarding Withdrawal as Counsel in
State v. Damore**

Liberty Law Group issues the following statement regarding the Court's order granting Eric Hagen and Justin Kalemkiarian leave to withdraw as counsel for Stephen M. Damore in Lancaster County District Court:

Our decision was not based on apathy, neglect, gamesmanship, or a belief that Mr. Damore had been ineffectively represented. Our firm devoted approximately 600 recorded hours to this matter, including investigation, transfer proceedings, appellate litigation, discovery review, client communication, and preparation for each phase of the case.

A considerable amount of hours spent preparing this case were devoted to a juvenile transfer hearing and appellate proceedings before the Nebraska Court of Appeals and Nebraska Supreme Court. Those proceedings involved narrow issues different in scope from full adult felony trial preparation. During that time, our firm was actively litigating the appeal – a decision that would dictate what court would have jurisdiction over the case and critical elements of process and procedure – while avoiding unnecessary duplication of work and client expense before the forum and posture were resolved.

When the case returned to the District Court, we repeatedly advised that the July trial setting did not allow sufficient time to prepare for a first-degree murder trial. As the July trial date approached, the State continued producing discovery, moved to endorse additional witnesses, and updated the investigation with new information, including witness statements and materials that still required review and evaluation.

We raised these concerns through two oral requests to continue, both of which were denied. On June 25, we filed a written motion to continue with a detailed affidavit identifying the outstanding work necessary to ensure effective preparation and a fair trial. That motion was also denied.

At that point, we faced a professional and constitutional obligation. Nebraska's Rules of Professional Conduct require competent representation in trial. Our request to continue was not for the sake of delay, but rather a request for the time

necessary to meet the standard every person accused of a serious crime is entitled to receive. When proceeding would prevent counsel from fulfilling that duty, withdrawal is not a strategy; it is an ethical responsibility.

We remain confident in the ethical steps we took and in the conscience behind those steps. We believe deeply in the constitutional process, in the presumption of innocence, and in the right of every accused person to receive a fair trial and effective assistance of counsel. Those rights are the foundation of the criminal justice system.

We are disappointed by the Court's decisions and by an outcome we believe was avoidable. Had the case been continued to the September jury term, a continuance of less than 60 days, we would have been ready to zealously defend Mr. Damore at trial. As it stands now, Mr. Damore is placed in the difficult position of securing new counsel in a serious case because the process moved toward trial on a timeline we could not, in good conscience, certify as constitutionally or ethically adequate.

We remain proud of the work performed, confident in the ethical steps we took, committed to the rule of law, and unwavering in our belief that constitutional protections matter most when they are hardest to protect.