



NEWS FROM: Michael Phillips
Candidate for Saratoga County District Attorney
Justice and Public Safety/Democratic Parties

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
LIBBY POST, 518/857-6788
libby@progressiveelections.com

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PHILLIPS CALLS ON HEGGEN TO PROSECUTE SEXUAL PREDATOR

Michael Phillips, candidate for Saratoga District Attorney, today called on current DA Karen Heggen to move the case against an alleged child rapist immediately to a grand jury. The case, he said, "has lingered for months for no reason other than possible favoritism to the predator."

"This case is overdue for prosecution," Phillips said, "not only because two felony complaints should not be idling in town court for eight months, but because there is substantial evidence that this is not the first time the accused has engaged in such behavior, a fact that Heggen's office seems to have overlooked."

Jonathan Aronson, 51, was arrested on January 5, 2022 for felony first degree rape, felony predatory sexual assault against a child, and misdemeanor endangering the welfare of a child, involving an incident that allegedly occurred on January 1, 2021. The charges were brought by a Saratoga County Sheriff's investigator to Greenfield Town Court, where they have remained through at least two adjournments agreed to by Heggen's office.

Aronson was previously convicted of misdemeanor unlawful dealing with a child--alcohol in September 2012. "Mr. Aronson's 2012 arrest, disposed in a likely plea bargain, should have presented a flashing red light to Heggen's office this year that they had a repeat offender on their hands. But there is nothing in the record that the DA's office had any concern about Mr. Aronson's prior offense," said Phillips

Phillips asked, "did the 2012 disposition involve sexual predation? Did the conviction require Mr. Aronson to be evaluated for registration as a sex offender? Did Mr. Aronson agree to any conditions of that conviction, and did he comply?"

"It is beyond irresponsible for DA Heggen to allow this most recent case to mangle, and for Mr. Aronson to walk free in the community, without bringing the matter before a grand jury. By failing to bring the charges before the grand jury, she is risking the collapse of the entire case. That's because, first, evidence in child sexual assault cases does not improve over time, as the victim and witnesses await justice and feel the stress of giving testimony. Second, both state and federal laws allow the accused to move for dismissal if the case has not been advanced by prosecutors, under the Constitution's 'speedy trial' guarantee," Phillips said.

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Aronson was released January 6 on \$50,000 cash bail/\$100,000 bond, and \$500,000 partially secured bond, following a County Court hearing at which Judge James A. Murphy III presided. "The DA's office raised no objection to the defendant's bail application, and did not ask for any further conditions such as electronic monitoring as would be appropriate for a repeat offender," Phillips added.

Finally, Phillips reported, "Mr. Aronson is part of a prominent and wealthy Saratoga Springs family. It goes without saying that he can afford the most expensive representation available in his defense. However, I fear that his wealth and prominence may be creating an atmosphere of favoritism in the courts and prosecutor's offices.

"That's wrong. It is the victims of crimes like this who should be our concern and priority, not a wealthy, connected repeat offender," Phillips said.

Phillips is endorsed by both the Democratic Party and the Justice and Public Safety party for the November 8 election. A U.S. Marine veteran, he is currently a prosecuting attorney for the New York State Health Department, handling cases of fraud and wrongdoing in the healthcare system.

"We should have one standard of justice in Saratoga County, the same for the rich and the not rich, regardless of race, creed, color or economic circumstance. This case reeks of undue influence and injustice, and the victim who was 11 years old when it happened, is being abused again every day that this case does not advance, and that is Ms. Heggen's doing," Phillips said .

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Phillips reported the following key dates in the Aronson case, obtained from the available public record:

- August 6, 2012: Arrested for endangering the welfare of a child, 1st degree, and unlawfully dealing with a child, misdemeanors, for incident July 1, 2012 on Crescent Avenue
- August 7, 2012: Arraignment, Saratoga Springs City Court
- September 21, 2012, pled guilty to Unlawful Dealing with a child, 1st degree, alcohol. Saratoga Springs City Court.
- January 5, 2022, Complaints filed for First Degree Rape, B Felony; Predatory Sexual Assault Against A Child, an A-II Felony; and Endangering the Welfare of a Child, A Misdemeanor. Greenfield Town Judge Michael Ginley.
- January 6, 2022, Bail hearing before Judge James A. Murphy III, County Court. Released on \$50,000 cash/\$100,000 Bond/\$500,000 partially secured bond at 10%. Returned to Town of Greenfield court.
- June 15, 2022. Adjourned in Greenfield Town Court, to August 17, 2022.
- August 17, 2022. Adjourned in Greenfield Town Court to September 21, 2022.