

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Former Jersey City Aide Files Federal Lawsuit Alleging Retaliation and Discrimination by Mayor Steven Fulop**

**Jersey City, NJ** — Today, Jonathan Gomez Noriega, a Colombian-born immigrant and former aide to Mayor Steven Fulop, filed a federal lawsuit against the City of Jersey City and several top officials, including Mayor Fulop himself. The lawsuit alleges wrongful termination, retaliation, and discrimination based on Gomez's constitutionally protected political activities and his status as an immigrant.

The complaint highlights the retaliation faced by Mr. Gomez, who had been an aide and friend to Mayor Fulop since 2018. The relationship took a turn when Mr. Gomez's sister, Valentina Gomez, decided to run as a Republican candidate for Missouri Secretary of State. Despite Mr. Gomez's opposition to her political views, he chose to support her candidacy out of familial loyalty, a decision protected by the First Amendment.

According to the lawsuit, Mayor Fulop initially expressed no concern about Mr. Gomez's support for his sister's campaign. However, as pressure mounted from local media and progressive political groups, the mayor began to retaliate against Mr. Gomez, culminating in his termination. The complaint details a series of harassing messages from Mayor Fulop, demanding that Mr. Gomez publicly disavow his sister or risk losing his job.

"Political affiliation is protected under the Constitution, and public employees should not be punished for exercising their rights," said attorney Giancarlo Ghione of Sekas Law Group. "This lawsuit seeks to hold Mayor Fulop and Jersey City officials accountable for retaliating against Mr. Gomez simply because he chose to support a family member with a different political ideology." Keeping in mind Mayor Fulop is running for the Democratic nomination for New Jersey governor, Ghione added, "A man that wants to represent all citizens of New Jersey cannot be controlled by emotion and fueled by political desires."

Mr. Gomez expressed his disappointment and resolve to fight back against the alleged abuse of power:

"Today, I filed a lawsuit before the federal courts to show that no mayor, governor, or public servant is above the law. My First amendment right was violated. I was retaliated against, coerced, wrongfully fired, and humiliated by the Mayor of Jersey City Steven Fulop, and his staff.

This is not about a job, or a political party. This is about our constitutional right to freedom of speech. Steven Fulop and the mayor's office tried to use me as a political pawn to further his campaign for governor of New Jersey, but this only backfired tremendously, by bringing a national spotlight to the wrongs he had just committed. Like Elon Musk says, the hammer of justice is coming.

So to all Americans. Speak the truth, and put God and family before anything."