

## **Defense Funds Needed In Key Trade Secrets Case**

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It's a David vs. Goliath case that could rock the insurance world. The plaintiff is State Farm Insurance and the defendant is Rich Pyorre, a former State Farm agent of 27 years who the company terminated for failing to attend a mandatory meeting several years ago. Shortly after he was terminated, the company sued Pyorre over trade secret violations. The company maintains that it owns the rights to all policyholder information such as names, addresses and policy expirations. Pyorre, on the other hand, adamantly disagrees, stating that it was he, not State Farm, that turned prospects into customers. And since it was his hard work and effort that ultimately persuaded people to buy, his contention is that the policyholder information belongs to him.

The case has dragged on for nearly ten years and the stakes are high for captive agents, especially those that, for one reason or another, leave a carrier to set up shop as an independent agent or take a job with another captive carrier. Should Pyorre prevail, the case would rank as one of the most significant legal victories ever for captive agents. "If agents owned the customer lists, companies would have to think twice before terminating anyone," said Jim Fish, executive director of the National Association of Professional Allstate Agents.

As any captive agent knows, fighting the likes of Allstate, State Farm or Farmers is never easy and never inexpensive. Their modus operandi is to wear people down until they drain them financially. Such is the case with Pyorre - the well is running dry. Until now, Pyorre has not sought financial assistance from other agents, but his cash reserves have dwindled and he goes back to court next month. In order to bring his case to conclusion, he needs to raise between \$50,000 and \$75,000. We hope you will consider donating to this just cause.

Remember, a win for Pyorre is a win for all captive agents.

To contribute, please mail your check to:

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Fort Bragg, CA 95437

For more information, you can reach Mr. Pyorre at 707-964-6331.