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County Recorder Stephen Richer files lawsuit against Kari Lake

The county recorder filed a lawsuit Thursday that accuses Republican Kari Lake of making defamatory comments about him after the 2022 election.

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PHOENIX — Maricopa County Recorder Stephen Richer announced Thursday he's suing former gubernatorial candidate Kari Lake for defamation.

In an editorial published by the Arizona Republic, Richer accused Lake of engaging in a "concerted campaign" against him after the Republican candidate lost the governor's race to Democrat Katie Hobbs.

"For the last seven months, I have been subjected to constant harassment, intimidation, and threats to my and my family's lives because the defendants in this case were spreading falsehoods about me, my work, and our elections," Richer said in a statement.

Online records show that the lawsuit was filed Thursday in Maricopa County Superior Court. Defendants in the lawsuit include Lake, Save Arizona Fund Inc, and Kari Lake For Arizona.

Richer, a Republican, was elected to office in 2020 and has pushed back against allegations that Arizona's 2022 election was mishandled or stolen.

Lake attempted to challenge the 2022 election results by filing litigation but a Maricopa County judge dismissed the last of her legal claims last month.

The lawsuit cites several examples of statements and comments Lake made publicly after the election that accused county officials of sabotaging the election.

Some of Lake's allegations were false simply because they implied Richer has the authority to handle operations on Election Day, the lawsuit alleges.

"...under Arizona law, Richer does not have responsibility for Election Day operations. As County Recorder, Richer is responsible for recording public records, maintaining voter files, registering voters, and administering the mail voting process in the county."

The lawsuit further claims that Lake's comments about Richer have ruined his reputation by "cutting him off from Republican networks and donors who once supported his career and future ambitions."

Due to the constant barrage of threats Richer's received over the last year, the county recorder said he's had to "spend time and money on additional medical treatment and medication."