

The Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Florida

HASKELL R. VEST, JR.
GRAND MASTER

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RULING AND DECISION NO. 1

These following questions have been asked pertaining to all actions taken associated with the Ruling and Decision of Regulation 26.21:

- A. If the Ruling and Decision regarding Regulation 26.21 was voted null and void ab initio by the Craft at the 196th Annual Grand communication, do all the consequent trials associated with the vote of the Craft become moot?
- B. Were the trials conducted strictly in accordance with Chapter 44 of the Digest of Masonic Law regarding the interpretation of regulation 26.21 (“Controversial Communications Prohibited”)?
- C. Were the accused given the opportunity to face their accuser or depose the statement presented by the accuser?
- D. Were the accused given the right to have representation with the right to ask questions of the accuser or depose the accuser’s statement?

THEREFORE, AS GRAND MASTER, IT IS MY RULING AND DECISION THAT:

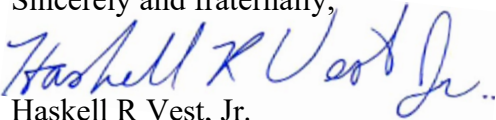
- 1) When Ruling and Decision No. 3, dated October 4, 2024 was presented by the Jurisprudence Committee as part of its report at the 196th Annual Grand Communication and said Ruling and Decision was subsequently reviewed by the Craft and was overturned, rejected, repealed ab initio and declared of no force or effect by this Grand Lodge, such proceedings associated with the Ruling and Decision are irregular.
- 2) The Ruling and Decision of Regulation 26.21 (specifically the Ruling and Decision that applied said Regulation retroactively to Social Media communications) is hereby declared null and void ab initio, and of no force or effect in this Grand Jurisdiction.
- 3) All trials that were associated with the Ruling and Decision with incidents occurring before the ruling was adopted constituted an impermissible application of Masonic Law, and due-process protections contained in Chapter 44 of the Digest and the Ancient Landmark of Justice (Constitution Article XIII and Regulation 1.04); and in those proceedings the accused Masons were also denied the opportunity to confront and cross-examine the accuser, in direct violation of Regulation 44.38 (Taking of Testimony); The accuser signed the charges, and in certain cases, provided testimony or submitted a statement that was treated as evidence against the accused.
- 4) All Masonic trials, convictions, and sentences (including any suspensions, expulsions, reprimands, or other penalties) that were based, in whole or in part, upon the overturned Ruling and Decision No. 3 interpreting Regulation 26.21 are hereby declared irregular and null and void ab initio.

- 5) Every Brother affected by any such trial or sentence is hereby restored to full and good standing in his Particular Lodge and in this Grand Jurisdiction, effective immediately, with all rights, privileges, and membership status reinstated as though the proceedings had never occurred;
- 6) No retrials or new proceedings shall be ordered or instituted based upon the same facts and circumstances that were the subject of these irregular proceedings;
- 7) The Grand Secretary is directed to:
 - a. Immediately notify every Particular Lodge and every affected Brother of this Ruling and Decision.
 - b. Expunge or correct all Grand Lodge and Lodge records accordingly.
 - c. Issue current dues cards to all restored Brothers upon request.

The Chairman of the Penal Affairs Panel is authorized and directed to take any and all additional administrative actions necessary to implement this Ruling and Decision.

This Ruling and Decision is issued to correct a serious irregularity in Masonic Jurisprudence, to uphold the Ancient Landmarks of Freemasonry (particularly the Landmark of Justice), to enforce the due-process requirements of Chapter 44, and to restore peace and harmony within the Craft.

Sincerely and fraternally,



Haskell R Vest, Jr.
Grand Master

