

## OUR VIEW

CLOSE THE CASE NOW

# Case against Hameli<sup>X/5</sup> defies state's rationale<sup>6/24/92</sup> at outrageous expense

For out-and-out, ham-handed clumsiness, it is hard to find anything to match the handling of the sexual harassment case involving Dr. Ali Z. Hameli, Delaware's former chief medical examiner.

**WHERE WE STAND**  
Spending more time and money to justify firing the state medical examiner is wasteful.

Dr. Hameli, an internationally noted forensic pathologist, apparently crossed some lines that angered his female employees. But instead of facing professional discipline, Dr. Hameli was summarily

fired by Carmen R. Nazario, the state secretary of Health and Human Services.

Almost from the beginning, the episode looked like a railroad job. Ms. Nazario seemed shocked that people could both condemn Dr. Hameli's behavior and hers.

Not surprisingly, Dr. Hameli sued in federal court and won. U.S. District Court Judge Sue L. Robinson ordered him reinstated with back pay on the grounds that he had been denied his constitutional right to confront his accusers. She ordered that he be given a proper hearing.

They put Dr. Hameli back on the state payroll, but suspended him pending the new hearing. The state agreed it would abide by the ruling of U.S. Magistrate Mary Pat Trostle and that it would be unappealable.

Three months ago, Magistrate Trostle trashed the state's case even worse than Judge Robinson had. Since then, the state has been trying to weasel out of the deal it made. After agreeing not to appeal the magistrate's ruling, they tried to appeal again to Judge Robinson.

All of this is costing Delaware taxpayers a small fortune: Dr. Hameli has collected more than \$211,000 while staying at home, about \$8,800 per month. Secretary Nazario bestowed \$70,000 on each of Dr. Hameli's accusers and litigation expenses have steadily climbed.

The state has lost this case. It needs to quit wasting tax money trying to redeem itself. Follow the court's recommendation, reprimand Dr. Hameli, make him attend lessons on workplace etiquette, and send him back to his job. Taxpayers might as well get their money's worth.