

Army Reserve First Sergeant, Iraq War Vet, and Local Police Officer Settles USERRA Lawsuit Against Rock Valley College

ROCKFORD, IL, DC, UNITED STATES, May 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- U.S. Army Reserve First Sgt. Vincent Lara, a veteran of the Iraq war and former Rock Valley College police officer, has reached a settlement in his federal lawsuit alleging violations of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act ([USERRA](#)).

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The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois (Case No. 3:22-cv-50014), alleged that Rock Valley College, through its police department — specifically former Sgt. Thomas Coe and former Chief of Police Irving “Joe” Drought — discriminated and retaliated against First Sergeant Lara based on his military service obligations. First Sergeant Lara Vincent said that “No service member should face discrimination for answering the call to duty.”

Lara alleged that he was subjected to harassment, denial of career opportunities, assignment to less favorable duties, and eventual constructive discharge as a result of his military duties and obligations.

First Sergeant Lara was represented by attorneys and [ROA](#) members John N. Maher, lieutenant colonel, U.S. Army Reserve, retired, and Kevin J. Mikolashek, a former U.S. Army Judge Advocate and U.S. Department of Justice trial attorney, both of Maher Legal Services PC, a firm that handles a good number of military and Federal employment law defense. Major Kevin J. Mikolashek said, “Federal law guarantees that military service should never be used as a reason to harass, retaliate, or fire someone — we will always stand ready to enforce those rights.”

First Sergeant Lara brought the lawsuit to defend not only his rights but also the rights of all U.S. military service members balancing civilian careers and military obligations.

The terms of the settlement are confidential, and Rock Valley College did not admit liability as part of the agreement. Lt. Col. John N. Maher (Ret.) declared, “This settlement sends a clear message: America’s citizen-soldiers deserve respect and protection in their civilian careers.”

The Reserve Organization of America

Phone: 202-646-7758

Email: tcriner@roa.org

Website: www.roa.org

Tremayne Criner

Reserve Organization of America

+1 202-646-7758

[email us here](#)

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