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Davidson County Chancery Court

FILED

IN THE CHANCERY COURT FOR THE DAVIDSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
TWENTIETH JUDICIAL DISTRICT

2025 APR -4 AM 10:30

CHAZZ HILL,

Petitioner,

CLERK & MASTER
DAVIDSON CO. CHANCERY CT

AM
25-0504-II

v.

Case No.

Jury Trial Demanded

STATE OF TENNESSEE,

Respondent.

PETITION FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF CHALLENGING
TENNESSEE'S VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER STATUTE

INTRODUCTION

1. This petition challenges Tennessee's voluntary manslaughter statute, Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-211, on the grounds that it is unconstitutionally vague under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and Article 1 § 8 of the Tennessee Constitution.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has jurisdiction under Tenn. Code Ann. § 29-14-102.

3. Venue is proper in this court as the events giving rise to this petition occurred within the jurisdiction of this court.

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PARTIES

4. Petitioner, Chazz Hill, is a resident of Memphis, Tennessee, and has a legitimate interest in the laws governing voluntary manslaughter in the state.

5. Respondent, the State of Tennessee, is the governmental entity responsible for enforcing its criminal laws, including the voluntary manslaughter statute.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

6. The Tennessee voluntary manslaughter statute, Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-211, defines voluntary manslaughter as intentionally or knowingly killing another person in a sudden heat of passion.

7. The statute further states that "sudden heat of passion" must be provoked by the victim in a manner that would inflame the passion of a reasonable person.

8. The terms "sudden heat of passion" and "reasonable person" are inherently subjective and lack clear definitions within the statute, leading to confusion regarding what constitutes provocation and the appropriate responses to it.

9. As a result, individuals may not have adequate notice of what conduct is criminalized under the statute, and law enforcement and prosecutors may apply the law arbitrarily.

LEGAL ARGUMENT

10. The void for vagueness doctrine is rooted in the fundamental principle that laws must provide fair notice of the conduct that is prohibited and must not encourage arbitrary enforcement.

11. The lack of clear definitions for critical terms in the Tennessee voluntary manslaughter statute creates ambiguity that undermines the ability of an ordinary person to understand what constitutes a violation of the law.

12. This vagueness invites arbitrary enforcement practices, as different law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges may interpret the statute in conflicting ways, leading to inconsistent application of the law.

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13. Additionally, the chilling effect of the vague statute may deter individuals from engaging in lawful behavior or making split-second decisions in emotionally charged situations for fear of criminal liability.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court:

A. Declare that Tennessee's voluntary manslaughter statute, Tenn. Code Ann. § 39-13-211, is *unconstitutionally vague in violation of the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment* and Article 1 § 8;

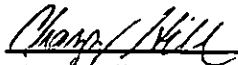
B. Enjoin the State of Tennessee from prosecuting individuals under the vague provisions of the voluntary manslaughter statute;

C. Award Petitioner costs and reasonable fees; and

D. Grant such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: 3/10/25

Respectfully submitted,



Chazz Hill, *Pro se*

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