

Media outlet wins court victory over billionaire

By **Monika Bauerlein and Clara Jeffery, Mother Jones**

Today we are happy to announce a monumental legal victory for *Mother Jones*: A judge in Idaho has ruled in our favor on all claims in a defamation case filed by a major Republican donor, Frank VanderSloot, and his company, Melaleuca Inc. In a decision issued Tuesday, the court found that Mother Jones did not defame VanderSloot or Melaleuca because “all of the statements at issue are non-actionable truth or substantial truth.” The court also found that the statements were protected as fair comment under the First Amendment.

This is the culmination of a lengthy, expensive legal saga that began three years ago when the 2012 presidential primaries were in full swing. On Feb. 6, 2012, we published an article about VanderSloot after it emerged that his company, Melaleuca, and its subsidiaries had given \$1 million to Mitt Romney’s super-PAC. The piece noted that VanderSloot had gone to unusual lengths to oppose gay rights in Idaho, and that Melaleuca had run into trouble with regulators.

VanderSloot’s lawyers sent us a letter complaining about the article. We reviewed their concerns and posted a correction about a few details. So far, not an uncommon scenario; it’s something every newsroom deals with from time to time.

Read the whole story