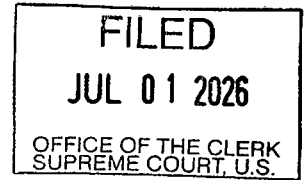


ORIGINAL



No. 26-132

IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

HONGFEI LIU,

Petitioner,

v.

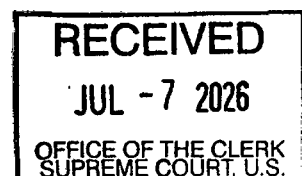
MIN LI,

Respondent.

On Petition For Writ Of Certiorari
To The Supreme Court of Texas

PETITION FOR WRIT OF CERTIORARI

Hongfei Liu
9507 Stone Castle Drive
Houston, TX 77064
(346) 606-7914
regit62@gmail.com
Petitioner, Pro Se



QUESTION PRESENTED

The Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees that no State shall deprive any person of property without due process of law, a protection that bars the imposition of substantial civil monetary judgments based upon arbitrary, speculative, or mathematically impossible evidentiary grounds.

In a state marital dissolution proceeding, the trial court entered a massive community asset "waste" finding and a dependent monetary judgment against Petitioner. The record demonstrates that this financial liability was manufactured by systematically double-, triple-, and quadruple-counting single cash flows (such as counting a single separate-property transfer four distinct times as a transfer, tuition, housing, and maternal support), penalizing legally non-existent transactions that were fully reversed on the banking record, and inventing decades of fictitious collegiate housing costs. The state appellate courts acknowledged independent property errors but affirmed this specific financial penalty in full.

The question presented is:

Whether a state court's judicial imposition and subsequent appellate affirmation of a substantial

civil monetary judgment violates the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment when the underlying judgment relies upon a demonstrably distorted, speculative arithmetic methodology that multi-counts single transactions and penalizes legally non-existent expenditures.

**PARTIES TO THE PROCEEDING AND
RELATED CASES**

The parties to this proceeding are:

Hongfei Liu, Petitioner v. Min Li, Respondent

Related Proceedings are:

- Min Li, Petitioner v. Hongfei Liu, Respondent, No. 2020-75847, In the 246th Judicial District Court of Harris County, Texas. Final Degree entered Sept. 26, 2023.
- Hongfei Liu, Appellant v. Min Li, Appellee No. 14-23-00810-CV, In the Fourteenth Court of Appeals of Texas, Houston, Texas. Opinion and Judgment rendered Jul. 15, 2025; Motion for Rehearing denied Nov. 13, 2025; Mandate issued April 13, 2026.
- Hongfei Liu, Petitioner v. Min Li Respondent, No. 25-1145, In the Supreme Court of Texas. Petition for Review denied Feb. 20, 2026; Motion for Rehearing denied Apr. 10, 2026.

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OPINIONS BELOW

The opinion and judgment of the Fourteenth Court of Appeals of Texas in Hongfei Liu v. Min Li, No. 14-23-00810-CV, were rendered on July 15, 2025.

The Court of Appeals held that the trial court erred in finding that certain real property located in Jibo City, China, was Respondent's separate property, in awarding Respondent's attorney's fees against Petitioner, and in its division of the community estate. The Court of Appeals reversed those portions of the judgment and remanded the case for further proceedings in accordance with its opinion. The Court of Appeals otherwise affirmed the judgment, including the trial court's findings concerning waste of the community estate and the related monetary judgment challenged in this petition.

Petitioner's Motion for Rehearing was denied by the Fourteenth Court of Appeals on November 13, 2025.

Copies of the opinion, judgment, and order denying rehearing are reproduced in the Appendix.

JURISDICTION

The judgment of the Fourteenth Court of Appeals of Texas became final for purposes of state appellate review when the Supreme Court of Texas denied

Petitioner's Petition for Review on February 20, 2026, and denied Petitioner's Motion for Rehearing on April 10, 2026, in Case No. 25-1145.

This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1257(a) because Petitioner seeks review of a final judgment rendered by the highest court of the State in which a decision could be had, and Petitioner raises federal questions under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

This Petition for a Writ of Certiorari is timely filed within ninety days after the Supreme Court of Texas denied Petitioner's Motion for Rehearing on April 10, 2026.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS INVOLVED

This case involves the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which provides in relevant part:

"Nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law."

U.S. Const. amend. XIV, § 1.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

Introduction and Trial Court Proceedings

This case arises from a state marital dissolution proceeding between Petitioner, Hongfei Liu, and Respondent, Min Li. The action was initiated by Respondent in the 246th Judicial District Court of Harris County, Texas (Cause No. 2020-75847). Following a bench trial, the court entered a Final Decree of Divorce on September 26, 2023.

As part of its property division, the trial court found that Petitioner had committed waste of the community estate totaling \$571,114.14. This calculation was based on an aggregated schedule of family expenses and transfers:

1. Tuition (William): \$46,152.00
2. Accommodations (William): \$18,000.00
3. Direct Transfer (William): \$36,000.00
4. Allowance (William): \$31,200.00
5. Tuition (Wilshire): \$44,990.00
6. Accommodations (Wilshire): \$94,220.00
7. Direct Transfers (Wilshire): \$19,000.00

8. Allowance (Wilshire): \$31,200.00
9. Maternal Support: \$85,000.00
10. Direct Transfers (Mother): \$160,000.00
11. Direct Transfer/Check (Sister): \$5,352.00

Based on this waste finding, the trial court entered a financial judgment against Petitioner in the amount of approximately \$94,291.00 and awarded attorney's fees to Respondent.

Petitioner's Constitutional Claim

Throughout the proceedings, Petitioner contended that the state court's waste assessment was structurally and mathematically flawed, resulting in an arbitrary inflation of the community liability. Specifically, the trial court's calculations included expenditures that Petitioner contends were counted more than once by simultaneously characterising them as distinct direct transfers, educational tuitions, housing accommodations, and general family support. Additionally, the calculations included transactions that Petitioner contends were duplicative, reversed, or derived from separate property.

Petitioner maintained that a judicial property division constructed on a fundamentally distorted, multiple counted evidentiary ledger violates the Due

Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Appellate Proceedings

Petitioner timely appealed to the Fourteenth Court of Appeals of Texas (Case No. 14-23-00810-CV). On July 15, 2025, the Court of Appeals issued its opinion and judgment, finding several reversible errors in the trial court's decree. The appellate court held that the trial court erred by classifying certain real property in Jibo City, China, as Respondent's separate property, erred in its overall division of the community estate, and erred in awarding attorney's fees against Petitioner. The court reversed those components of the decree and remanded the matter for further proceedings.

However, despite these systemic property division errors, the Court of Appeals affirmed the remaining portions of the judgment—including the trial court's flawed waste calculation and the dependent \$94,291.00 monetary judgment against Petitioner. Petitioner filed a Motion for Rehearing, which the Court of Appeals denied on November 13, 2025.

Petitioner subsequently sought discretionary review in the Supreme Court of Texas. The Supreme Court of Texas denied Petitioner's Petition for Review on February 20, 2026, and further denied a subsequent Motion for Rehearing on April 10, 2026.

This Petition for a Writ of Certiorari seeks review only of those portions of the state court judgment that were affirmed below and continue to impose an unconstitutional, unbacked financial judgment against Petitioner.

REASONS FOR GRANTING THE PETITION

I. The Decision Below Affirms A Substantial Deprivation Of Property And Presents Important Questions Under The Due Process Clause Of The Fourteenth Amendment

The Fourteenth Amendment prohibits a State from depriving any person of property without due process of law. This Court has long recognized that significant property interests are entitled to constitutional protection from arbitrary governmental action. See *Logan v. Zimmerman Brush Co.*, 455 U.S. 422, 428 (1982).

In this case, the state courts affirmed findings that Petitioner committed waste of the community estate in the amount of \$571,114.14 and affirmed a related monetary judgment against Petitioner. Petitioner contends that these findings resulted in a substantial deprivation of property and were not supported by reliable evidence.

The financial consequences of the affirmed findings are significant and continue to affect Petitioner's property rights. This case therefore presents important constitutional questions concerning the evidentiary and procedural safeguards required before a State may impose substantial monetary liability and reallocate property interests.

II. The Affirmed Waste Finding Was Based Upon Duplicative, Reversed, And Materially Inflated Calculations

Petitioner contends that the affirmed waste finding of \$571,114.14 was materially inflated by multiple categories of error.

According to Petitioner, the calculation included transactions that were counted more than once, transactions that were fully reversed and caused no actual loss to the marital estate, and expenditures derived from premarital separate property without evidence that community assets were involved.

Petitioner further contends that a \$36,000 transfer derived from separate property was counted multiple times under different categories of alleged waste. Petitioner also contends that a \$19,000 transfer that was immediately reversed nevertheless remained included in the waste calculation.

Another example concerns alleged college accommodation expenses. Petitioner contends that both students attended college for less than five years, yet the waste calculation attributed \$94,220 in accommodation expenses based upon an 83-month occupancy period. Petitioner testified that this methodology substantially exceeded the students' actual periods of attendance and materially inflated the claimed amount of waste.

Petitioner maintains that these and other calculation errors substantially increased the amount attributed to waste and materially affected the resulting monetary obligations imposed against him.

III. The Case Presents Important Questions Concerning The Protection of Property Rights

The Due Process Clause protects individuals against arbitrary deprivations of property. See *Logan v. Zimmerman Brush Co.*, 455 U.S. 422 (1982).

Petitioner contends that the affirmed findings resulted in a substantial deprivation of property through calculations that overstated the amount of alleged waste and improperly characterized legitimate expenditures as wrongful dissipation of marital assets.

Petitioner further contends that certain expenditures characterized as waste were consistent with the parties' longstanding financial practices and understandings. A written premarital agreement signed by both parties was presented and discussed during the trial proceedings. Although the trial court declined to enforce that agreement, Petitioner maintains that it reflected the parties' understanding concerning the management of finances and support obligations during the marriage.

The constitutional questions presented extend beyond the particular facts of this case and concern the safeguards that must accompany judicial findings resulting in substantial monetary liability and deprivation of property.

IV. This Court's Review Is Necessary To Ensure That Substantial Deprivations Of Property Occur Only Through Procedures Consistent With Due Process Of Law

This Court has emphasized that due process requires fundamentally fair procedures before substantial property interests may be impaired. See *Mathews v. Eldridge*, 424 U.S. 319 (1976).

Petitioner contends that the affirmed waste finding and related monetary judgment were based upon

duplicated transactions, reversed transactions, separate-property expenditures, and materially inflated calculations that lack adequate evidentiary support.

Absent review, Petitioner will remain subject to significant financial consequences arising from findings that he contends were arbitrary, unreliable, and inconsistent with the protections guaranteed by the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

This Court's review is warranted because this case presents the recurring question whether the Due Process Clause permits a state court to impose and affirm substantial monetary liability based on findings that a litigant contends lack adequate evidentiary support and materially affect protected property interests.

For these reasons, the Petition for a Writ of Certiorari should be granted.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Petitioner respectfully requests that this Court grant the Petition for a Writ of Certiorari to review the judgment of the Fourteenth Court of Appeals of Texas and, upon review, reverse or vacate the portions of the

judgment affirming the trial court's findings concerning alleged waste of the community estate and the related monetary judgment imposed against Petitioner, or alternatively remand the case for further proceedings consistent with this Court's opinion.

Petitioner further requests such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Hongfei Liu", written over a horizontal line.

Hongfei Liu

9507 Stone Castle Drive

Houston, TX 77064

(346) 606-7914

Regit62@gmail.com

Petitioner, Pro Se