

Stokesbary PLLC

November 1, 2019

Mx. Fox Blackhorn
Public Disclosure Commission
711 Capitol Way South, Suite 206
Olympia, WA 98504-0908

Sent via email to pdc@pdc.wa.gov

Dear Mx. Blackhorn,

My name is Drew Stokesbary, and my firm, Stokesbary PLLC, is representing Kittitas County Commissioner Cory Wright in PDC Case Number 59159.

I urge the PDC to quickly dismiss this unfounded complaint. The Complainant only sets forth the following facts:

- Mr. Wright was appointed as a Kittitas County Commissioner and is now running for election to that position.
- Lisa Young, Human Resources Director for Kittitas County, sent out an email (the “Young Email”) to Kittitas County elected official and department heads, following up on an episode that occurred in the Commission’s executive session involving Mr. Wright.

Neither of these facts, separately or together, violate the prohibition against the “use of any of the facilities of a public office or agency...for the purpose of assisting a campaign.” RCW 42.17A.555. Indeed, “[a]ctivities which are part of the normal and regular conduct of the office or agency,” such as the Young Email, are explicitly excepted from this prohibition. RCW 42.17A.555(3).

The Complainant, vaguely and without any evidence, alleges that Mr. Wright “manipulated the resources of the county” and “campaign[ed] for [himself], by sending out an email...defending [himself] from external campaign accusation.” Both of these assertions are false and, again, lacking evidence.

In reality, Mr. Wright prepared a statement (the “Wright Statement”) sharing his perspective about the executive session events. The Wright Statement was prepared without any use of Kittitas County resources and published on Mr. Wright’s personal social media channels and campaign webpage. Unbeknownst to Mr. Wright, Ms. Young had been simultaneously preparing the Young Email as part of her official duties. After the Wright Statement was posted, Ms. Young informed Mr. Wright that she was drafting

the Young Email and asked his permission to include a copy of the Wright Statement. Mr. Wright consented to this request, but he never asked, directed, suggested or encouraged Ms. Young to send the Young Email or include the Wright Statement as an attachment.

Furthermore, a full reading of the Young Email and *all* attachments (the Complainant only included one attachment, the Wright Statement) indicates that its purpose had nothing to do with “campaign[ing] for Cory” or “defending Cory.” Indeed, some of the other attachments are not necessarily favorable to Mr. Wright or his campaign, and their inclusion in the Young Email belies the Complainant’s accusation it was sent for the purpose of assisting Mr. Wright’s campaign.

Lastly, the Complainant also alleges that the “email was potentially seen by all Kittitas County employees.” While this may be technically true, it is both meaningless (because it’s not disprovable) and irrelevant (because even if true, it wouldn’t constitute a violation of RCW 42.17A.555). Regardless, it should be noted that the Young Email was only sent to Kittitas County elected officials and department heads, and the recipients were explicitly instructed to use their “discretion” when sharing with other county employees.

Therefore, because there is no factual basis to support finding that Mr. Wright violated RCW 42.17A.555, and because the email in question is specifically permitted as “part of the normal and regular conduct” of Kittitas County, this complaint should be promptly dismissed.

If I can provide any additional information to you, other PDC staff, or the Commissioners, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Drew Stokesbary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Drew Stokesbary
WSBA #46097