



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

711 Capitol Way Rm. 206, PO Box 40908 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0908
(360) 753-1111 • FAX (360) 753-1112

Toll Free 1-877-601-2828 • E-mail: pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov • Website: www.pdcc.wa.gov

August 12, 2020

Delivered electronically to Paddy McGuire, Mason County Auditor

Subject: Complaint filed by Terry Peterson against Mason County Auditor, PDC Case 74588

Dear Mr. McGuire:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its review of the complaint filed on July 30, 2020 by Terry Peterson against the Mason County Auditor alleging that Auditor's Office may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by sharing a League of Women Voter's of Washington Facebook post on the Mason County Auditor's Office Facebook page.

As noted below in the electronic letter sent to Mr. Peterson, the PDC will not be conducting a more formal investigation into the allegations listed in the complaint or taking further enforcement action in this matter.

While there was no information posted that supported or opposed any candidates on the LWV Facebook site dating back to July 11, 2020, there was information provided about 2020 candidate forums. PDC Interpretation #04-02 Guidelines for Local Government Agencies in Election Campaigns states information posted on the Mason County Auditor's Facebook and website that is election-related or references candidates and ballot propositions needs to be an objective and fair presentation of the facts.

The PDC has dismissed the complaint in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1). If you have questions, you may contact Kurt Young by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Endorsed by,

/s

Electronically Signed Kurt Young
Compliance Officer

/s

Electronically Signed, BG Sandahl, Deputy Director
for Peter Lavalley, Executive Director



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August 12, 2020

Delivered electronically to Terry Peterson

Subject: Complaint filed by Terry Peterson against Mason County Auditor, PDC Case 74588

Dear Mr. Peterson:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its review of the complaint you filed on July 30, 2020. Your complaint alleged that Mason County Auditor's Office may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by sharing a League of Women Voter's of Washington Facebook post on the Mason County Auditor's Office Facebook page.

PDC staff reviewed your allegations, the statutes, rules and PDC Interpretation #04-02 Guidelines for Local Government Agencies in Election Campaigns, and the August 10, 2020 response from Paddy McGuire, incumbent Mason County Auditor. As a result of staff's review, we found the following:

- RCW 42.17A.555 states that no public employee, elected or appointed official or other public agent may use public facilities to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure.
- As part of your complaint, you attached a July 11, 2020 Mason County Auditor's Office Facebook post that stated the following: "You can update your voter registration online at VoteWA.gov if you have a valid Washington Driver's License or WAID card. If not, go to our website masoncountyelections.us to download a registration form or contact us. #BeVoteReady."
- Below the post from the Mason County Auditor was a July 3, 2020 repost from the League of Women Voter's (LWV) of Washington Facebook page, featuring a picture of a woman in an orange Hazmat suit holding a clipboard stating "Are you registered to vote at your current address?" followed by the statement "Nothing stops the LWV from registering citizens to vote." The repost included a hyperlink to the LWV Facebook homepage.
- Mr. McGuire stated the following in his response: "The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization dedicated to expanding participation in the electoral process. What was linked to from our official Facebook page was not election advocacy. None of the issues that the

complainant was able to find by searching the website of the League of Women Voters is a matter of a Washington State ballot measure.”

- Staff briefly reviewed the information and postings on the LWV Facebook site. The Overview of the LWV included on the About page stated that LWV is “a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.”
- The Facebook information posted on the LWV site provided lots of information about registering to vote, the importance of registering and voting, the suffrage movement that provided women the opportunity to vote, and recognizing individuals that have worked on behalf of voting rights including Congressman John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hammer, and Alice Dunbar Nelson to name just a few.
- Based on staff’s review, no information was posted on the LWV Facebook site that supported or opposed any 2020 candidates dating back to July 11, 2020.

PDC staff found no evidence of a violation that would require conducting a more formal investigation into the complaint or pursuing any enforcement action in this instance.

The PDC has dismissed the complaint in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1). If you have questions, you may contact Kurt Young by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Endorsed by,

/s _____
Electronically Signed Kurt Young
Compliance Officer

/s _____
Electronically Signed, BG Sandahl, Deputy Director
for Peter Lavalley, Executive Director

cc: Paddy McGuire, Mason County Auditor

