



State of Washington  
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

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October 26, 2020

Sent electronically to Michael Sternberg at [msternberg@hughes.net](mailto:msternberg@hughes.net)

Subject: Complaint regarding Howard Hambleton, PDC Case 77806

Dear Mr. Sternberg:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its review of the complaint you filed on September 23, 2020. Your complaint alleged that Howard Hambleton, a first-time candidate for the County Commissioner (District 3) in Ferry County, may have violated WAC 390-18-040 by using the term “Re-elect” in political advertising.

PDC staff reviewed the applicable statute, rule, and the evidence submitted with the complaint and the October 9, 2020 response submitted by the respondent.

Based on staff review, we found the following:

- On May 30, 2020, Howard Hambleton filed a Candidate Registration (C-1) report declaring his candidacy for Ferry County Commissioner District 3 in the 2020 election and selected the Mini Reporting option.
- Mr. Hambleton is the incumbent District 3 County Commissioner in Ferry County, having been appointed to that position in March 2020.
- Mr. Hambleton’s Campaign maintained a Facebook page and campaign materials/literature that contained the term “Re-elect Howie Hambleton – Ferry County, District #3 Commissioner @CommissionerHambleton,” before it was changed to “Retain Howie Hambleton – Ferry County, District #3 Commissioner@CommissionerHambleton.”
- In its response to the complaint, received on October 9, 2020, the Campaign by way of Charisse Hambleton stated, “I am the person in charge of my husband’s campaign information and I made a mistake. This is the first time that either of us have done any campaigning. My husband was appointed as commissioner in March and is currently serving in that office. That is the reason I used the term “re-elect.” Once we were made aware that the term was incorrect (about two weeks ago), we changed the website, literature, and all ads to read “retain.” I am very sorry for the mistake. It was simply a misunderstanding on my part, and we have taken action to rectify the error.”

While our review found that Mr. Hambleton's Campaign originally maintained a Facebook page, advertisement materials, and literature that contained the term "Re-elect Howie Hambleton" before it was changed to "Retain Howie Hambleton," he is a first-time candidate who has no prior PDC violations. Mr. Hambleton was also prompt in taking corrective action as soon as this complaint was brought to his attention.

However, PDC staff will remind Howard Hambleton about the importance of using the correct term when running for a political office in the future as required by WAC 390-18-040.

Based on this information, the PDC finds that no further action is warranted and has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1).

If you have questions, you may contact Erick Agina, Compliance Officer at (360) 586-2869, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828, or by e-mail at [pdc@pdc.wa.gov](mailto:pdc@pdc.wa.gov).

Sincerely,

Endorsed by:

/s \_\_\_\_\_  
Erick Agina, Compliance Officer

/s \_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Sandahl, Deputy Director for  
Peter Lavalley, Executive Director

cc: Howard Hambleton

