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Notified to: "PDC Support" <pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov>

Please present the following to the PDC committee:

To Whom It May Concern:

Please forgive me for forgetting to file my F9 in 2020.

Although it is now filed, I feel you deserve to know why I'd drop the ball on something that I'd normally hold as critically important, and simply didn't remember to do this year.

Even barring COVID-19, this last year was harder on myself and my four (now five) children than we could ever imagine.

I literally could not catch a break, nor a breath.

I tried hanging on to my position as School Board Director because I truly loved helping my community. Even though it was an unpaid position. I've previously sat on multiple large boards, including at large agencies like the United Way, along with running non-profit organizations, without ever missing dotting an 'i' or crossing a 't'.

Imagine my shock when I discovered that the PDC had tried reaching me several times via my former school email address (which I lost access to upon resigning, of course) and at my former home address. I only discovered I'd forgotten to file after the current residents saw the words "court appearance" on the envelope's exterior and kindly forwarded it to my new address.

I certainly forwarded my mail. For some reason, many documents did not get through.

Of all the reasons why I didn't remember to file my 2019 F9 in 2020, a few grave life changes stand out.

1. After 16 years with my children's father, 13 married, he had a mental health breakdown which started and continued through 2019, becoming too risky to remain in the home. He was sent to a mental health facility, and did not return to reside with me and the children for reasons I'd rather not put into public record, for the sake of his livelihood and my children's privacy, now and into the future.

When the Special Education services on Orcas became even more scarce, and navigating the community with him making our lives a living hell, I left the home I'd worked for 12 years to purchase, and moved into a rental in Bellingham, WA so my children could receive appropriate services for their special needs.

As you can imagine their father's exit was both a mental hardship for my children and myself, as a single parent, and a financial hardship.

I'm still bailing out of that financial hardship, working harder than ever with 4 children and a baby at home, with business at only half of what it generated the year prior.

2. I felt truly blessed when my best friend not only helped me move off island, he stepped in to help with my children. I felt truly grateful that business was still flowing in well enough to provide for us, even with a several thousands dollar deficit I had to cover due to their father's exit

(this was right before COVID). Obviously his instability diminishes his financial stability, so my four older children's father does not help financially.

Then, the one person I could count on, the father of my fifth child (currently a newborn, what a blessing!) grew ill and ended up hospitalized off and on for months, unable to communicate, unable to function, unable to help financially, and unable stay with me because I could not care for him and for four children while pregnant.

COVID hit and suddenly I not only had four kids at home all day (and I was 100% in charge of providing support for their distance learning), I was pregnant AND had to now working twice as many hours just to stay afloat because no one could afford regular prices during COVID.

I literally didn't sleep more than three hours a night from March through November. Last night I squeezed in a miraculous four hours. Austin (my infants) father finally made a near full recovery around Thanksgiving. We're catching up financially, but he lost nearly all of his business as well.

With all of this happening, it's no wonder my brain could have ever remembered to file anything.

While others are in the midst of a crisis due to COVID, we were already trying to get a fresh start during a crisis.

I worked every second of the day just trying to keep the kids learning via distance education, working twice as many hours, and keeping up a household alone while pregnant.

That's essentially three full time jobs.

That's just touching the surface. **Before this year I've always had my life 100% together, even living with someone with significant mental health challenges.**

Because I'm already working three full time jobs; running a business for twice as many hours to keep my children fed, ensuring they receive adequate education throughout COVID; have suffered incredible hardship after decades of helping others without ever asking for a cent in return, and have **already tapped all of my resources just to keep the lights on (including asking and receiving approval from non-profit organizations to include my children on Christmas Wish Lists because I cannot afford to provide them with a Christmas this year after they've already faced an insane amount of trauma, for which I'm working with counselors and my children every week...another draw on my time) I'm asking that you please waive whatever fees are attached.**

This was a simple mistake. I could no longer access my email address after resigning, obviously, because that breaks laws. I was no longer at the same residence and only found out because those living there saw the words 'court' and got the piece of mail to me.

I have always served my community, in every possible capacity, whenever asked, from running the PTSA, to cleaning up the streets, to providing shelter for children who didn't have any, to bringing warm meals to the homeless, to being part of the team that delivered nearly 30,000

boxes of food to children and families this summer because "I could find the time" and "no one else would".

I just need this right now, this one exception, after so many years where I've held it all together, for everyone around me. This one time I dropped the ball, on a position where I stepped up when no one else would. A position I only resigned because it was too emotionally traumatic for my children to remain where we lived. It's certainly not like I benefited financially from this position.

And if that isn't enough, please know that **my current weekly grocery budget is approximately \$117 per week**, to keep myself and four children fed (the baby still nurses full-time, on demand, so really, I couldn't work more hours if I tried. I already work with him sleeping against me inside of my shirt because it's the only way he'll actually stay asleep so I can work) so while \$100 or \$150 may not seem like much for 'forgetting', that's a week of food I can no longer feed my family. And I already asked for Christmas Presents...

Not really sure what else it's going to take.

I'm really hoping things brighten very, very soon, and I'm really hope you'll consider waiving all fees and penalties to help me make this the start of what should be an amazing future, and a fresh start.

Thank you again for all that you do.

Diane Boerstler