

Rice, Martha

Replied

6/28/2021

This email is in response to PDC Case #93799 and submitted by Martha Rice.

The complainant, Kenton Gartrell, alleges that I used my official title and official Yakima School District email in an effort toward "...voter manipulation, harassment of an endorsement, and utilizing school board positions and resources to slander and libel my campaign to aid theirs:." **Mr. Gartrell fails to provide evidence to support this blatantly false charge.**

I am a member of the board for the Yakima School District. I also serve as board president. One of the expectations between Yakima School Board members and the Yakima School District superintendent is that there are no surprises. To that end, whenever the Superintendent's office is made aware of a complaint against a school board member, the school board president is always notified and the reverse is true as well. When Mr. Gartrell registered his complaint with the school district about the actions of Norm Walker, a member of the board, the Superintendent's office forwarded that complaint to me as the board president.

Mr. Gartrell claims that I called his endorser, Michelle Perry, shortly after receiving the email with his complaint. My records indicate I received a copy of his complaint which included a public records request at 12:00 p.m. on June 16th, from the Superintendent's Executive Assistant, who had been in her position less than a week and sought guidance on how to handle the request. According to my records, I placed a phone call to Michelle Perry, Mr. Gartrell's endorser, at 12:33 p.m., however the call went to voicemail. I left my number and asked her to return my call. I never spoke with her at that time or since. Ms. Perry and I serve on a common committee with the Washington State School Directors Association and we had a committee meeting coming up in a few days. It is not uncommon for committee members to speak with one another in regard to the activities or business that will be conducted by the committee. Since my voicemail to Ms. Perry was only to provide her with my phone number and ask for a return phone call and since she never called me back, nothing was discussed and Mr. Gartrell has no way of knowing the purpose of that call.

Mr. Gartrell further claims that three Yakima school board members "...coordinated and conspired against..." him to pressure his endorser, Michelle Perry, to remove her endorsement. Mr. Gartrell provides no evidence to support that claim. This has not occurred. Therefore, his claims of "...voter manipulation, harassment of an endorsement, and utilizing school board positions and resources to slander and libel my campaign..." are unfounded and should be dismissed.

Martha Rice