



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

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March 10, 2025

Delivered electronically to james.freed@live.com

Subject: Brief Enforcement Hearing Notice; PDC Case 154814

Dear James Freed:

On the date below, the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) will hold a Brief Adjudicative Proceeding (Brief Enforcement Hearing) in accordance with RCW 42.17A.110 and RCW 42.17A.755 to determine if you violated RCW 42.17A.235 and 240 by failing to file a mandatory C-4 expenditure report, Post General C-4 report due December 11, 2023, respectively, as alleged in PDC Case 154814

Under the Brief Enforcement Hearing rules, the Presiding Officer has the authority to assess a civil penalty in accordance with WAC 390-37-143, a penalty schedule adopted by the Commission (see enclosed copy).

Your attendance at the hearing is encouraged but not required.

HEARING INFORMATION

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Date and time: | Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. |
| Place: | Remotely from Olympia Live Audio and Online Transmission |
| Presiding Officer: | J. Leach, Chair, Public Disclosure Commission, or his designee |
| Authority: | RCW 42.17A and WAC 390 |

PARTICIPATING IN THE HEARING VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

The Brief Enforcement Hearing will be audio and video recorded. The Presiding Officer and PDC Staff will attend in-person or remotely via Microsoft Teams videoconferencing platform.

- **PLEASE READ the entire instructions below *prior to the day of the hearing if you plan to participate via MS Teams.***

Please note that you may be prompted to download the MS Teams app or use a supported browser (Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome) for best performance.

Anyone wishing to participate in the hearing remotely must follow the instructions below and join the meeting on a computer or mobile app **promptly at 1:30 p.m. on April 10, 2025**. Please remain in the meeting until the Presiding Officer calls your name and case number. After your case has been heard, you may leave or stay in the meeting.

Please note that you must stay muted at all times except while your case is being heard.

Join on your computer or mobile app:

Join the meeting

<https://tinyurl.com/3das4bk8>

If you are unable to use Teams or experience technical difficulties, please call the PDC's main number 1-360-753-1111 to obtain information regarding alternate participation by telephone.

If you choose to participate in the hearing remotely, please be aware that you may be waiting in the queue for an unknown period of time while cases are being heard and you may have a limited amount of time to speak. If a lengthier response time is needed, please consider submitting written participation materials prior to the hearing (see below).

INTERPRETER

If a party or witness to this proceeding speaks limited English or is hearing-impaired, and needs an interpreter, a qualified interpreter will be appointed at no cost to you. Please inform us at least five business days before the hearing or no later than **April 3, 2025**, if you require an interpreter for this proceeding and/or translation of its written materials in a language other than English. Please contact us by email at pdc@pdc.wa.gov or call us at (360) 753-1111 or 1-877-601-2828 to request an interpreter.

SUBMITTING WRITTEN MATERIALS

In advance of the Brief Enforcement Hearing, you may provide a written response describing the facts of your case for consideration by the Presiding Officer, including any circumstances or mitigating factors you would like considered. Please submit your written response so it is received by the PDC no later than **April 3, 2025**.

SUBMITTING THE REPORT

You are strongly encouraged to complete and submit the required missing report [online](#) prior to the Brief Enforcement Hearing. The report must be submitted electronically and instructions are available online.

If you have any questions about the hearing process prior to the hearing date, please contact PDC Staff by email at pdc@pdc.wa.gov – and be sure to reference your case number in the subject line of the email.

Sincerely,

PDC Staff
Compliance and Enforcement Division



Enclosures

- Brief Enforcement Hearings FAQ
- PDC Penalty Schedule
- Statement of Understanding

BRIEF ENFORCEMENT HEARINGS – INFORMATION FOR FILERS

You have received a letter or email from the PDC scheduling a Brief Enforcement Hearing before a PDC Commissioner. Here are the answers to some Frequently Asked Questions about these brief hearings. This FAQ is informational only and should not be considered legal advice.

What is a Brief Enforcement Hearing?

The PDC is responsible for enforcing the State's campaign finance laws. We may schedule what is called a Brief Enforcement Hearing (also known as a "Brief Adjudicative Proceeding" under the Administrative Procedure Act) to address compliance with campaign finance reporting requirements when evidence shows the following types of alleged violations may have occurred:

- Failure to file or timely file required reports of financial affairs, campaign contributions and/or expenditures, independent expenditures, or funds spent on lobbying;
- Improper use of public facilities or resources in election campaigns when the value of public funds expended or facilities used was minimal; and
- Infractions of political advertising laws regarding sponsor identification or political party identification.

Brief Enforcement Hearings may be scheduled on other matters as well, if the basic facts are agreed to or are not being contested, and it is anticipated that the likely penalty imposed (if a violation is found) will be \$1,000 or less. The Commission has adopted a penalty schedule for Brief Enforcement Hearings which can be found in the Washington Administrative Code [WAC 390-37-143](#).

A Presiding Officer, who is a PDC Commissioner, will conduct the hearing. PDC Staff will present the case to the Presiding Officer, and you will have an opportunity to explain the circumstances related to the alleged violations. You may do this by telephone, or in writing by email or letter.

Who are the parties involved?

The PDC Staff initiates and investigates possible violations, and brings cases forward to the Commission or its Presiding Officer. The person who is alleged to be out of compliance with the law is referred to as the "Respondent."

What can I do to avoid the hearing?

If you received a hearing notice, you still have the opportunity to come into compliance by filing the missing report(s), paying the stated penalty, and completing a *Statement of Understanding* stipulating to the violation(s). If you would like to take this approach, please contact PDC Compliance and Enforcement staff at pdcc@pdc.wa.gov

What do I do to prepare for the hearing?

The brief hearings are informal in nature. You are not required to have an attorney for this hearing. Hearings take place virtually. You need to let the staff know at least five business days before the hearing whether you will be participating online, by phone, or prefer not to participate.

If you are having other people (witnesses) testify on your behalf, they must be available at the hearing, and staff needs to be informed of the number of witnesses and time needed for their testimony when you notify the staff of your participation. The scheduled hearing starting time is the start time for several matters that will be heard by the Presiding Officer, and your case may not be the first one heard. So you will need to remain available to participate until your case is called.

Waiving your right to participate. If you have submitted nothing in writing prior to the hearing, have made no other arrangements, and you do not appear online, by phone, in-person, or through your legal counsel at the hearing, it will be presumed that you have decided to waive your right to participate at the hearing.

What happens at the hearing?

The Presiding Officer will introduce the participants and explain the procedure for the hearing. The hearing will be recorded.

The Presiding Officer will swear-in PDC Staff for them to present information regarding the alleged violation of law. You will then have an opportunity to testify, which is your opportunity to present information. All testimony by staff, Respondents, and witnesses is given under oath. The Presiding Officer may ask you some questions about the information you, PDC Staff, or witnesses have presented. If you have decided to participate in writing instead of online or by phone, your written information will be considered by the Presiding Officer as part of the hearing materials.

If at any time the Presiding Officer believes the alleged violations are serious enough to merit penalties greater than \$1,000, the Presiding Officer will adjourn the hearing and direct that the matter be scheduled for a hearing before the full Commission at a later time.

How is the decision made?

After considering all the information presented at the hearing, the Presiding Officer will make a decision about the allegation(s) and any appropriate penalty amount. The decision is typically announced orally at the hearing.

The Presiding Officer will use the penalty schedule referred to above that has been adopted by the Commission in rule to determine the appropriate penalty for certain types of violations, taking into account aggravating and mitigating factors. The penalty schedule is below.

What happens after my hearing?

A written decision, called an Initial Order, laying out the Presiding Officer's ruling, including the findings and the penalty, will be sent to you. The PDC tries to get orders issued within 10 days if possible, and not later than 30 days. If a monetary penalty is imposed in the Initial Order, the penalty must be paid to the **Washington State Treasurer**, and paid within the time frame stated in the Order.

Along with your Initial Order, you will also receive information about your appeal rights, including how to request review or reconsideration by the full Commission if you disagree with the Initial Order. Follow these procedures carefully if you wish to appeal. If there is no appeal before the PDC, the Initial Order becomes a Final Order, and further appeals must be made in Superior Court.

What are the rules that apply to the procedures of my hearing?

The PDC's laws and rules are available on the PDC's website at www.pdc.wa.gov. The laws are in the Revised Code of Washington ([RCW Chapter 42.17A](#)). The rules are in the Washington Administrative Code ([WAC Title 390](#)). Brief Adjudicative Proceedings are described at [WAC 390-37-140](#) through [390-37-150](#) and in the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) at [RCW 34.05.482-494](#).

Penalty Schedule [[WAC 390-37-143](#)]:

The Presiding Officer may assess a penalty up to one thousand dollars upon finding a violation of chapter [42.17A](#) RCW or Title 390 WAC.

(1) Base penalty amounts:

| Violation | 1st Occasion | 2nd Occasion | 3rd Occasion |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Failure to timely file an accurate and complete statement of financial affairs (F-1): | | | |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Provided written explanation or appeared at hearing to explain mitigating circumstances. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$0 - \$150 | \$150 - \$300 | \$300 - \$600 |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failed to file report by date of enforcement hearing. | \$250 | \$500 | \$1,000 |
| Candidate's failure to timely file an accurate and complete registration statement (C-1)/statement of financial affairs (F-1): | | | |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Provided written explanation or appeared at hearing to explain mitigating circumstances. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$0 - \$150 per report | \$150 - \$300 per report | \$300 - \$600 per report up to \$1,000 |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$150 per report | \$300 per report | \$600 per report up to \$1,000 |
| Failed to file report by date of enforcement hearing. | \$250 per report | \$500 per report | consideration by full commission |
| Failure to timely file an accurate and complete lobbyist monthly expense report (L-2): | | | |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Provided written explanation or appeared at hearing to explain mitigating circumstances. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$0 - \$150 | \$150 - \$300 | \$300 - \$600 |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failed to file report by date of enforcement hearing. | \$250 | \$500 | \$1,000 |
| Failure to timely file an accurate and complete lobbyist employer report (L-3): | | | |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Provided written explanation or appeared at hearing to explain mitigating circumstances. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$0 - \$150 | \$150 - \$300 | \$300 - \$600 |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failed to file report by date of enforcement hearing. | \$250 | \$500 | \$1,00 |
| Failure to timely file accurate and complete disclosure reports: | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| Political committee registration (C-1pc). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Statement of contributions deposit (C-3). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Summary of total contributions and expenditures (C-4). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Independent expenditures and electioneering communications (C-6). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Last minute contribution report (LMC). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Out-of-state committee report (C-5). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Annual report of major contributors (C-7). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failure to timely file accurate and complete reports disclosing lobbying activities: | | | |
| Lobbyist registration (L-1). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Public agency lobbying report (L-5). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Grass roots lobbying report (L-6). | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failure to file electronically. | \$350 | \$650 | \$1,000 |
| Exceeding contribution limits. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Exceeding mini reporting threshold. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failure to comply with political advertising sponsor identification requirements. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failure to include required candidate's party preference in political advertising. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failure to comply with other political advertising requirements, RCW 42.17A.330 through 42.17A.345 . | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Use of public facilities to assist a campaign for election or promote a ballot measure. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Treasurer's failure to timely file an accurate and complete annual treasurer's report (T-1): | | | |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Provided written explanation or appeared at hearing to explain mitigating circumstances. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$0 - \$150 | \$150 - \$300 | \$300 - \$600 |
| Filed report after hearing notice, but before enforcement hearing. Did not enter into statement of understanding. | \$150 | \$300 | \$600 |
| Failed to file report by date of enforcement hearing. | \$250 | \$500 | \$1,000 |

"Occasion" means established violation. Only violations in the last five years will be considered for the purpose of determining second and third occasions.

(2) In determining the appropriate penalty, the presiding officer may consider the nature of the violation and aggravating and mitigating factors, including:

(a) Whether the respondent is a first-time filer;

(b) The respondent's compliance history for the last five years, including whether the noncompliance was isolated or limited in nature, indicative of systematic or ongoing problems, or part of a pattern of violations by the respondent, or in the case of a political committee or other entity, part of a pattern of violations by the respondent's officers, staff, principal decision makers, consultants, or sponsoring organization;

(c) The respondent's unpaid penalties from a previous enforcement action;

(d) The impact on the public, including whether the noncompliance deprived the public of timely or accurate information during a time-sensitive period, or otherwise had a significant or material impact on the public;

(e) The amount of financial activity by the respondent during the statement period or election cycle;

(f) Whether the late or unreported activity was significant in amount or duration under the circumstances, including in proportion to the total amount of expenditures by the respondent in the campaign or statement period;

(g) Corrective action or other remedial measures initiated by respondent prior to enforcement action, or promptly taken when noncompliance brought to respondent's attention;

(h) Good faith efforts to comply, including consultation with PDC staff prior to initiation of enforcement action and cooperation with PDC staff during enforcement action, and a demonstrated wish to acknowledge and take responsibility for the violation;

(i) Personal emergency or illness of the respondent or member of his or her immediate family;

(j) Other emergencies such as fire, flood, or utility failure preventing filing;

(k) Sophistication of respondent or the financing, staffing, or size of the respondent's campaign or organization; and

(l) PDC staff, third-party vendor, or equipment error, including technical problems at the agency preventing or delaying electronic filing.

(3) The presiding officer has authority to suspend all or a portion of an assessed penalty under the conditions to be determined by that officer including, but not limited to, payment of the nonsuspended portion of the penalty within five business days of the date of the entry of the order in that case.

(4) If, on the third occasion, a respondent has outstanding penalties or judgments, the matter will be directed to the full commission for consideration.

(5) The presiding officer may direct a matter to the full commission if the officer believes one thousand dollars would be an insufficient penalty or the matter warrants consideration by the full commission. Cases will automatically be scheduled before the full commission for an enforcement action when the respondent:

(a) Was found in violation during a previous reporting period;

(b) The violation remains in effect following any appeals; and

(c) The person has not filed the disclosure forms that were the subject of the prior violation at the time the current hearing notice is being sent.

[Statutory Authority: RCW [42.17A.110](#)(1) and 2018 c 304. WSR 18-24-074, § 390-37-143, filed 11/30/18, effective 12/31/18. Statutory Authority: RCW [42.17A.110](#)(1) and [42.17A.570](#). WSR 18-10-088, § 390-37-143, filed 5/1/18, effective 6/1/18. Statutory Authority: RCW [42.17A.110](#). WSR 17-03-004, § 390-37-143, filed 1/4/17, effective 2/4/17.]



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Public Disclosure Commission Statement of Understanding

James Freed

PDC Case 154814

I, James Freed, hereby acknowledge that, during election year 2023, while a candidate running for election to FIRE COMMISSIONER of THURSTON FIRE PROT DIST 12, I violated RCW 42.17A.235 and .240 by failing to file the required expenditure (C-4) report due December 11, 2023.

I would like to avoid the time and expense of a Brief Adjudicative Proceeding (Brief Enforcement Hearing) scheduled for April 10, 2025.

Therefore, in lieu of a hearing, I:

- Have filed the missing C-4 report;
- Acknowledge that I violated Washington State law as described above; and
- Agree to enter into this *Statement of Understanding* (SOU) to resolve the above matter with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC).

I understand that, by signing this SOU, I acknowledge the violation[s] of Chapter 42.17A RCW and Title 390 WAC set forth above and waive my right to a hearing in this matter. I further understand that signing this SOU and returning it to the PDC will resolve this case.

James Freed

Date Signed

The signed Statement of Understanding (SOU) is due by March 31, 2025.