

**Complaint Against: Thurston County Democrats****Submitted:** 7/11/2025**Notice to Respondent Due By:** 7/21/2025 per WAC 390-37-050(1)**90 Day Initial Hearing Deadline:** 10/9/2025 per RCW 42.17A.755(3)**Statutes Violated:** RCW 42.17A.235, .240**Background****Washington State's Campaign Finance Disclosure Law**

One of the primary purposes of the public disclosure law is to provide citizens of this state, and especially voters, with the means for becoming informed about the financing of political campaigns.<sup>1</sup> The public disclosure law was enacted through voter approval of Initiative 276 in 1972.

State law requires candidates and committees that register under full reporting to submit regular reports of financial activity. Those reports are filed on schedules outlined on the PDC's key reporting dates calendar.<sup>2</sup>

**Violations**

On their most recent C4 report (<https://apollo.pdc.wa.gov/public/registrations/campaign-finance-report/110297874>) the respondent failed to include the address for four separate expenditures. This has happened several times now.

Additionally, the 6/28 expenditure for \$560, listed as "Cash for Burger Booth", is (as I understand it) improper. Line 18 includes petty cash which would include the cash the respondent withdrew for the various summer events it is hosting.

In other words, taking money out of the bank account and converting it to cash shouldn't be reported as an expenditure. The fact that withdrawal of cash was reported in such a way and certified as accurate by the treasurer suggests that the respondent's Line 18 balance does not match the actual bank account balance as required.

Additionally, the respondent failed to list the occupation for a \$375 contribution from Patti Nelson. Only the employer was listed as "self-employed". I understand PDC staff believe this is improper. See link: <https://apollo.pdc.wa.gov/public/registrations/campaign-finance-report/110272927>

**Conclusion**

I urge the PDC staff to take quick action and resolve the noncompliance identified in this complaint.

Best,

/s/ Conner Edwards  
(425) 533-1677 cell

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pdc.wa.gov/registration-reporting/candidates-committees/registration-reporting-basics>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pdc.wa.gov/registration-reporting/candidates-committees/registration-reporting-basics/key-dates-2024>

## **Notice to Respondent**

I apologize to you for any inconvenience caused by this complaint. The chance that you will actually be fined for the violations identified above is extremely small because the agency is averse to doing the work necessary to bring cases to hearings. Most likely this case – and any future cases against you – will simply be dismissed by staff.

This complaint is one of over one thousand complaints that I have filed to highlight and ultimately fix the significant shortcomings associated with the agency responsible for administering our state's campaign finance laws.

What are these shortcomings?

Overcomplicated and outdated requirements that are difficult to understand and comply with. Failure to properly educate the regulated community about the tasks they must perform to remain in compliance with applicable requirements and avoid complaints. Failure of the agency to send regular reminders to filers about pending deadlines. A failure to proactively enforce applicable requirements which enables the complaint system to become weaponized. Non-intuitive, non-user friendly, and buggy reporting software. Failure to meaningfully enforce core requirements. Failure to follow the best operating practices of other neighboring campaign finance agencies. An agency leadership structure that largely disregards stakeholder input and is slow to identify and resolve major agency deficiencies.

I believe that the best way to motivate the agency to address these problems is by filing a large number of complaints so that the agency's problems become impossible to ignore.

Slowly (too slowly) this strategy is starting to yield concrete and beneficial changes. You can read about these changes here: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/why-one-man-filed-800-campaign-finance-complaints-against-wa-candidates/>

If you believe that the agency could have done something different to help you proactively avoid the issues identified in this complaint, I hope that you will consider including it in your response. The agency, and the public, can benefit from your perspective and feedback.

**“Be the change that you wish to see in the world.”**  
**— Mahatma Gandhi**