

Complaint Description

[Conner Edwards](#) reported 10 days ago (Sat, 29 Sep at 8:19 PM) via Portal Meta

To Whom it May Concern --

It has come to my attention that the Pierce County Library System has violated RCW 42.17A.555 by promoting passage of a ballot proposition using public resources.

Two weeks ago, the Pierce County Library System took out paid Facebook ads to promote an article from the Tacoma News Tribune that supported passage of a property tax levy. The levy will be on the November '18 ballot. I believe that this is a clear violation of both the plain language and the intent of RCW 42.17A.555.

The situation may have been different if the PCLS had merely reposted the article or shared a link to it on its website, which would not have required spending any money with an outside vendor like Facebook. This may have been able to qualify for the "normal and regular" exemption contained in RCW 42.17A.555(3).

In adjudicating this complaint, the PDC has the ability to make a choice. If they choose to take action against the Pierce County Library System by issuing a fine, they will reinforce the plain language interpretation of RCW 42.17A.555. If they fail to issue a fine, they will effectively create a loophole where public entities can easily sidestep the intent and plain language of RCW 42.17A.555.

If PDC staff do not intend to take any action on this complaint, I request that they not hold an "initial hearing" or issue any type of return letter. Doing so would block my ability to appeal the PDC's determination and frustrate the purposes of RCW 42.17A. It is my preference that this issue be adjudicated or informed by the opinion of the Commissioners and not solely determined by staff.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Conner Edwards
(425) 533-1677 cell

What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?

Use of public resources (via spending money on Facebook ads) to promote a ballot measure instead of spending that money on maintenance and improvement of local public libraries.

List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found.

Facebook likely has the exact spend data on how much PCLS put into the ad.

List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them.

Unknown. PCLS staff.

Complaint Certification:

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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Pierce County Library

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