



State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
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3/20/2018

Delivered electronically to “pmcarter@jps.net”

Subject: Complaint regarding Laura Ann Garris, PDC Case 24161

Dear Pamela Carter:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its initial review of the complaint you filed on August 2, 2017.

Your complaint alleged that Laura Ann Garris may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using pictures of public facilities, vehicles, and staff to imply endorsement and RCW 42.17A.335 by using defamatory language about a candidate.

Your first allegation concerns the application of [RCW 42.17A.555](#), which states that no elective official nor any employee of his or her office nor any person appointed to or employed by any public office or agency may use or authorize the use of any of the facilities of a public office or agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition.

Your second allegations concerns the application of [RCW 42.17A.335](#), which states that it is a violation for a person to sponsor with actual malice a statement constituting libel or defamation per se.

PDC staff reviewed your allegations, and as a result of staff’s initial review, we found the following:

- Laura Ann Garris included images of the Tukwila city seal, a police officer, and police vehicle on her campaign website.
- RCW 42.17A.555 only applies to public officials and employees, Laura Garris did not use public facilities as an elected official.

- RCW 42.17A.335 specifies that defamation can only occur when it is a false claim made about another candidate with malicious intent.
- Your complaint did not provide clear and convincing evidence that Laura Garris violated RCW 42.17A.335 by sponsoring statements that constitute libel or defamation with actual malice that meet the criteria of RCW 42.17A.

Based on these initial findings, staff has determined that in this instance, there is no evidence to support a finding of a material violation warranting further investigation.

The PDC has closed the matter, and will not be conducting a more formal investigation into your complaint or pursuing enforcement action in this case.

If you have questions, you may contact Micaiah Ragins at 1-360-586-4555 toll free at 1-877-601-2828, or by email as micaiah.ragins@pdc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s_____

Micaiah Ragins

Compliance Coordinator

Endorsed by,

/s_____

Barbara Sandahl

Deputy Director

For Peter Lavallee

Executive Director

cc: Laura Ann Garris