



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

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March 1, 2023

Delivered electronically to "longbmt@gmail.com"

Subject: Complaint regarding Washington Citizens for Liberty, Sponsoring Political Advertising without Required Sponsor Identification, PDC Case 99327 (Re: Complaint 98973 received 9/30/21)

Dear Bryan Matthews Taylor:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its investigation of the complaint you filed on September 30, 2021. Your complaint alleged that Washington Citizens for Liberty may have violated RCW 42.17A.320 by failing to include complete sponsor identification on political advertising supporting Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell in their 2021 campaigns for Central Valley School District (CVSD) school director positions.

RCW 42.17A.320 requires all written political advertising, whether relating to candidates or ballot propositions, to include the sponsor's name and address.

PDC staff reviewed your allegations; the applicable statutes and rules; the responses provided by Washington Citizens for Liberty; and other relevant information, to determine whether the record supports a finding of one or more violations. After completing its initial review and assessment of your complaint, and other complaints concerning Washington Citizens for Liberty, PDC staff opened a formal investigation and held an initial hearing (also referred to as a case status review) on December 17, 2021, pursuant to RCW 42.17A.755, and WACs 390-37-060 and 390-37-071.

As a result of the investigation, concerning your allegations concerning missing sponsor identification on political advertising, staff found the following:

- On or around September 24, 2021, a political advertising flyer was distributed in CVSD neighborhoods advocating for the election of Pam Orebaugh to CVSD Board Position 5, and Bret Howell to CVSD Board Position 2, as a write-in candidate.

- The two-sided flyer explicitly asked the reader to elect Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell to the respective CVSD board positions.
- The flyer also included the platforms of both candidates and a statement about Washington Citizens for Liberty and its mission.
- Washington Citizens for Liberty filed its Articles of Incorporation with the Washington Secretary of State's Corporations & Charities Division on August 24, 2021 as a charitable organization. The purpose of the corporation was listed as "Charitable organization established to assist and support Washington State citizens when faced with challenges to or infringement of fundamental constitutional and legal rights, freedoms and liberties which they are entitled as citizens or legal residents of the United States of America."
- The Registered Agent was listed as Robert (Rob) Linebarger. The initial board of directors included Robert Linebarger, Pam Orebaugh, and Natalie Gauvin. Robert Linebarger was listed as the entity's incorporator. The Articles of Incorporation were later amended to remove Pam Orebaugh and Natalie Gauvin as board members.
- Rob Linebarger stated Washington Citizens for Liberty was not involved with and did not sponsor the flyer distributed on or around September 24, 2021 or the postcard titled, "Not your Mama's PTA!"
- Pam Orebaugh stated the "Not your Mama's PTA!" postcard, which expressed support for Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell, was designed and purchased by a "concerned grandma" without Ms. Orebaugh's knowledge or approval.
- Staff confirmed that Shannon Balmes sponsored the "Not your Mama's PTA!" postcard. Ms. Balmes stated she spent \$30 at Vista Print to print around 100 postcards. Ms. Balmes stated she gave a few postcards to an apartment complex near where she lives but was then advised all advertising in support of the candidates needed to go through the candidates' campaigns, so she destroyed the remaining postcards. Ms. Balmes said she was unaware of the requirement to include her name and address on the postcards as the sponsor. Ms. Balmes said she had nothing to do with printing the separate flyer that supported Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell.
- Mr. Linebarger denied that Washington Citizens for Liberty sponsored the separate flyer supporting Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell. Mr. Linebarger stated Washington Citizens for Liberty has many citizen followers and has no control if or when a private citizen who agrees with the group's values and principles visits the public website, captures information from the site, and creates material in support of a movement or candidate.
- PDC staff was unable to determine who sponsored the separate flyer.

After a careful review of the alleged violations and relevant facts, PDC staff has concluded its investigation and determined that in this instance, concerning the alleged failure to include Sponsor Identification, in accordance with RCW 42.17A.320, on a flyer and postcard supporting Pam Orebaugh and Bret Howell in their 2021 campaigns for CVSD Board Positions, Washington Citizens for Liberty did not sponsor the postcard and no evidence was found that they sponsored the separate flyer. Based on this information, these allegations are dismissed in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1).

If you have questions, you may contact Phil Stutzman at 360-664-8853, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828, or by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,
Electronically Signed Philip E. Stutzman
 Phil Stutzman
 Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,
Electronically Signed Kim Bradford
Kim Bradford
Deputy Director
For Peter Frey Lavallee
Executive Director

cc: Rob Linebarger, Washington Citizens for Liberty