



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

711 Capitol Way Rm. 206, PO Box 40908 • Olympia, Washington 98504-0908
(360) 753-1111 • FAX (360) 753-1112

Toll Free 1-877-601-2828 • E-mail: pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov • Website: www.pdcc.wa.gov

August 17, 2023

Delivered electronically to RonDel Krauter at wpkrt88@icloud.com

Subject: Complaint filed by Tracey De Garmo, PDC Case 137965

Dear RonDel Krauter:

Below is a copy of an electronic letter sent to Tracey De Garmo concerning a complaint filed with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC).

As noted in the letter to Tracey De Garmo, the PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1) and will not conduct a more formal investigation into these allegations or take further enforcement action in this matter.

If you have questions, you may contact Tabatha Blacksmith at 1-360-586-8929, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828 or by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov

Sincerely,

Electronically signed Tabatha Blacksmith
Tabatha Blacksmith
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

Electronically signed Kim Bradford
Kim Bradford
Deputy Director
For Peter Frey Lavalley
Executive Director



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August 17, 2023

Delivered electronically to Tracey De Garmo at tracedegarmo@hotmail.com

Subject: Complaint regarding RonDel Krauter, PDC Case 137965

Dear Tracey De Garmo:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its review of the complaint you filed on June 1, 2023. The complaint alleged that RonDel Krauter, a 2023 candidate for City Council Member for City of Sprague, may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using public office or agency facilities (resources) for the purpose of assisting an election campaign. Specifically, you alleged that Mr. Krauter's use of a city email address on his candidate registration constituted an improper use of city facilities.

PDC staff reviewed the allegations and evidence you submitted; the applicable statutes, rules, and reporting requirements; the response provided by RonDel Krauter (the "Respondent"); the applicable PDC reports filed by the Respondent; and other relevant information to determine whether the record supports a finding of one or more violations.

Based on staff's review, we found the following:

- The Respondent is a first-time candidate who seeks the office of City Council Member of the City of Sprague in election year 2023. He filed a *Declaration of Candidacy* with Lincoln County Elections on May 15, 2023 and listed cityhall@sprague-wa.us (an email address that belongs to the City of Sprague) as his campaign email. According to the City of Sprague's website, this email belongs to the City Clerk/Treasurer, Heather Krauter. The Respondent also listed a city telephone number (509-257-2662) as his campaign phone number. This information appeared online at VoteWA.gov
- [RCW 42.17A.555](#) prohibits elected or appointed officials, their employees, and employees of a public office or agency from using, or authorizing the use of, public office/agency facilities¹ (resources), directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting an election campaign or for the promotion of, or opposition to, any ballot proposition.
- PDC staff spoke to Lincoln County Elections staff by phone on June 21, 2023 regarding the contact information submitted by the Respondent. Elections staff indicated the

¹ "Facilities" include, but are not limited to, use of stationery, postage, machines, and equipment, use of employees of the office or agency during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the office or agency, and clientele lists of persons served by the office or agency.

Respondent could update his candidate registration, and any new contact information provided would appear online at VoteWA.gov. However, they said it was too late to make changes to the Voter's Pamphlet for the 2023 Primary Election, which had already been finalized.

- On June 21, 2023, the Respondent spoke to PDC staff by phone and indicated he misunderstood the information requested on the *Declaration of Candidacy* form and couldn't find any answers online. He said he thought the form was asking for contact information for the office he sought by election, not his campaign's contact information. He said he is running a small campaign, does not have a campaign email address, and doesn't plan to collect contributions or make expenditures. He stated that Heather Krauter is his wife.
 - PDC staff instructed the Respondent to reach out to Lincoln County Elections to have his candidate record corrected online to omit City of Sprague's email address and phone number.
- On June 26, 2023, the Respondent provided a written response to the complaint allegation, wherein he indicated this is his first time running for office and he misunderstood the contact information requested on the *Declaration of Candidacy* form. He apologized for the error, said it would not happen again, and confirmed that the City of Sprague has nothing to do with, and is in no way using public funds for, his campaign.
- The Respondent reached out to Lincoln County Elections on June 26, 2023 and July 11, 2023 requesting they remove the City of Sprague's contact information from his candidate record and replace it with the Respondent's contact information. PDC staff confirmed these changes were made to the Respondent's candidate record online at VoteWA.gov
- On July 17, 2023, the Respondent confirmed, by email, that he currently does not work for the City of Sprague nor has he worked for the city in the past.
- In an email dated August 9, 2023, the Respondent stated "...Heather Krauter is my wife she has no role in my campaign other than spell checking my emails and emotional support the use of her city email and phone number was a mistake she has no real role in my campaign other than the fact that she is my wife the city is not funding my campaign..."
- On August 14, 2023, Heather Krauter, City Clerk/Treasurer for the City of Sprague, and spouse of the Respondent, confirmed the following:
 - She did not assist the Respondent in completing his *Declaration of Candidacy*, and indicated that he obtained the city's contact information from its website;
 - The Respondent did not have access to the City of Sprague's email address or phone number at any time between 5/15/23 and 8/14/23; and
 - As of August 14, 2023, she has not received any emails or phone calls at cityhall@sprague-wa.us or (509) 257-2662 about her husband or his election campaign.

- The Respondent does not have any previous warnings/violations of PDC requirements.

RCW 42.17A.555 can only be violated by elected or appointed officials, their employees, and employees of a public office or agency². The Respondent does not meet the above criteria and therefore would not be subject to .555. Furthermore, the evidence is insufficient to show that another person subject to .555 authorized the use of city resources by the Respondent. Finally, the Respondent does not appear to have actual access to a city email address or city phone number – a situation that prevents him from using the city’s resources in any event.

Based on our findings, staff has determined that, in this instance, no evidence supports a finding of a violation that warrants further investigation.

Based on this information, the PDC finds that no further action is warranted and has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 42.17A.755(1).

If you have questions, you may contact Tabatha Blacksmith at 1-360-586-8929, toll-free at 1-877-601-2828 or by e-mail at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov

Sincerely,

Electronically signed Tabatha Blacksmith

Tabatha Blacksmith
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

Electronically signed Kim Bradford

Kim Bradford
Deputy Director
For Peter Frey Lavalley
Executive Director

cc: RonDel Krauter

² RCW 42.17A.555 does not apply to state officers or employees, who are subject to RCW 42.52.180.