

Snohomish Ebony PAC response to the complaint
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PDC Case 144427

(Tue, 7 Nov 2023 at 9:25 AM)

To:"PDC Support" <cdc@cdc.wa.gov>

External Email

Dear Mr. Young,

Thank you for bringing the concerns outlined in your recent communication to our attention. We take our responsibilities under the Public Disclosure Commission's regulations with the utmost seriousness and appreciate the opportunity to address the concerns raised. Please find below a point-by-point response to the allegations:

- **Regarding RCW 42.17A.235 and .240 (C-3 and C-4 Reports):**

We regret any inconvenience caused by the delayed submission of our Monetary Contributions reports (C-3 reports) and Summary Full Campaign Contribution and Expenditure reports (C-4 reports). This oversight was due to an internal miscommunication and capacity constraints within our team, which we are actively working to address. We assure you that there was no intent to obscure our financial activities and that we are committed to transparency and compliance. As such, we have already addressed the issues regarding the late submission of our C-3 and C-4 reports. Steps have been initiated to immediately rectify these omissions, and we will ensure timely filings going forward.

- **Regarding RCW 42.17A.260/.305 (C-6 Reports on Mailers):**

The failure to file Independent Expenditure and/or Electioneering Communications reports (C-6 reports) for mailers distributed in support of local Snohomish County candidates was an oversight that we deeply regret. Given this is our first experience conducting an independent expenditure, we were misguided about the C-6 process and how to accurately and timely report this information. While we attempted to complete the C-6 reports prior to sending this response, we were unsuccessful, and as such, request support in filing the report to the standards of the PDC and Washington law.

- **Regarding RCW 42.17A.405 and WAC 390-05-210 (Mailer Endorsing Demi Chatters):**

This allegation is the subject of an unfortunate departure of one of our key compliance monitors. This person stepped away from the role suddenly which contributed to the outdated C1pc filing for the Snohomish Ebony PAC's leadership, as well as subsequent C-3 and C-4 reports. To clarify, Demi was the official treasurer in 2022, but at our first meeting in 03/2023 our organization appointed Louis Harris to be the treasurer, while Demi committed to serving as a board member for SEPAC even though she was running an election. There were specifically two occasions where Demi stepped in to support SEPAC PDC filings because the transition to have someone else do them never materialized. After the primary, Demi officially stepped away from her board duties and was no longer involved in the decision making at SEPAC.

Regarding consulting, collaborating, or cooperating with Demi in any facet of the mailer's creation or production, we can say with certainty that did not happen. While the organization has been supportive of Demi, because of her hard work and dedication to the community, she was not involved with activities of the Snohomish Ebony PAC after 08/2023, including the creation and sending of the mailer. This can be corroborated by our organization's minutes for all our meetings in 2023.

- **Regarding RCW 42.17A.320 (Top 5 Contributor Information):**

The omission of the Top 5 contributor information on a mailer was a regrettable oversight. We acknowledge the importance of this requirement and are committed to ensuring all future communications are fully compliant. This error was unintentional and arose during a period of high activity within our organization which led to a lapse in our usual checks and balances. Please let us know if there is a way to rectify this issue, as we were not able to find a solution on the PDC website.

As we work to compile the requested details and submit the missing reports, we wish to express our earnest commitment to adhering to the PDC's standards and regulations. To summarize and ensure we are answering all of your questions please see the following:

- Updated all C-3 and C-4 reports for 2023.
- Amended the C1pc to reflect actual board members as the start of 2023.

Please describe the total costs of the "Vote Yes" for Demi Chatters and "Let's Say NO to Scott Bader" mailer, and Ms. Chatters involvement in that process.

1. The two-sided mailer which featured "Vote Yes" on one side and "Let's Say NO to Scott Bader" on the other side was a \$7953.12 expense that we believe was an independent expenditure since we did not consult or cooperate with Demi Chatters or her campaign staff/proxies in the creation of the mailer. Demi was not the treasurer or a contributing member of SEPAC and that is reflected in our updated C1pc filing, and the attached minutes for SEPAC in 2023. Furthermore we need support in ensuring the C-6 is filed correctly.

Concerning the Gloria Ngezaho mailer, please describe the total costs of the mailer, and whether the mailer was coordinated with the candidate and was an in-kind contribution or if it was an independent expenditure or electioneering communication. In addition, if the mailer was an independent expenditure or electioneering communication, please file a C-6 report as soon as possible.

1. The total cost for this mailer was \$6316.38. Gloria has had no involvement, cooperation, or collaboration with SEPAC for his mailer. As such Gloria had no prior knowledge of the creation, planning, or execution of the mailer. This was an independent expenditure for SEPAC and we need assistance in filing the C-6 correctly.

Finally, staff's review found the last Committee Registration was filed on January 15, 2022, listing Demi Chatters as the Treasurer of record. Please list the Committee's 2023 current officers, including the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer. I could not find an amended Committee Registration was filed by the Committee, is Ms. Chatters the current Committee Treasurer? If no, please explain.

1. Demi Chatters was never the treasure for SEPAC for 2023. Demi did support SEPAC in 2023 by filing several C-3 and C-4 reports because of gaps in the organization's capacity in 2023. Demi stepped away from the organization and thus her role as a board member after the Primary. She had no knowledge of the mailer before or after her departure, because the organization did not have the money to do a mailer until 09/2023 when SEPAC was contracted to provide voter registration and outreach services in Snohomish County.

In conclusion, we understand the gravity of these issues and are dedicated to rectifying them with the utmost diligence. We look forward to your understanding and are prepared to cooperate fully with the Commission to resolve these matters.

Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,

SEPAC - Snohomish Ebony PAC

www.snoebonypac.com

