

Respondent Names
William (Beau) Burkett
Complainant Name
Conner Edwards
Complaint Description
<u>Conner Edwards</u> reported via the portal <i>(Tue, 28 Jan 2025 at 10:07 AM)</i> See attached complaint. <u>Notice to Respondent</u> I apologize to you for any inconvenience caused by this complaint. The chance that you will actually be fined for the violations identified above is extremely small because the agency is averse to doing the work necessary to bring cases to hearings. Most likely this case – and any future cases against you – will simply be dismissed by staff. This complaint is one of hundreds that I have filed to highlight and ultimately fix the significant shortcomings associated with the agency responsible for administering our state’s campaign finance laws. What are these shortcomings? Overcomplicated and outdated requirements that are difficult to understand and comply with. Failure to properly educate the regulated community about the tasks they must perform to remain in compliance with applicable requirements and avoid complaints. Failure of the agency to send regular reminders to filers about pending deadlines. A failure to proactively enforce applicable requirements which enables the complaint system to become weaponized. Non-intuitive, non-user friendly, and buggy reporting software. Failure to meaningfully enforce core requirements. Failure to follow the best operating practices of other neighboring campaign finance agencies. An agency leadership structure that largely disregards stakeholder input and is slow to identify and resolve major agency deficiencies. I believe that the best way to motivate the agency to address these problems is by filing a large number of complaints so that the agency’s problems become impossible to ignore. Slowly (too slowly) this strategy is starting to yield concrete and beneficial changes. You can read about these changes here: https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/why-one-man-filed-800-campaign-finance-complaints-against-wa-candidates/

If you believe that the agency could have done something different to help you proactively avoid the issues identified in this complaint, I hope that you will consider including it in your response. The agency, and the public, can benefit from your perspective and feedback.

“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept.”

— **Angela Davis**

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

See complaint. The PDC has an obligation to provide transparency to the voters by enforcing disclosure requirements. The agency’s failure to actively monitor compliance with these requirements and enforce them damages both the public and members of the regulated community

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

See complaint and also PDC website.

List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them

See complaint and also PDC website.

Certification (Complainant)

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.

Complaint Against: William (Beau) Burkett

Submitted: 1/28/25

Notice to Respondent Due By: 2/7/25 per WAC 390-37-050(1)

90 Day Initial Hearing Deadline: 4/28/25 per RCW 42.17A.755(3)

Statutes Violated: RCW 42.17A.700, . 710

Background

Washington State's Personal Financial Affairs Disclosure Law

One of the primary purposes of the public disclosure law is to provide citizens of this state, and especially voters, with the means for becoming informed about the personal financial affairs of elected officials. The public disclosure law was enacted through voter approval of Initiative 276 in 1972.

Personal financial information is disclosed on the F-1 report by candidates at the start of the campaign and annually by elected officials, state boards and commissions members, state agency directors, and legislative and gubernatorial professional staff. Appointed officials must file the F-1 report within 2 weeks of being appointed.

This information allows the public to assess whether elected officials may have conflicts of interest.

Background

Beau Burkett has been fined numerous times for failing to timely/accurately file F1 reports, see link: <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/rules-enforcement/enforcement/enforcement-cases?respondent=Burkett>

Violations

Beginning in 2021, Beau Burkett owed the State of Washington (by and through the fines levied by the PDC) over \$2400. See link: <https://pdc-case-tracking.s3.us-gov-west-1.amazonaws.com/3802/80176%20Burkett%20William%20Order%20Packet.pdf> .

In 2022, an additional \$10,000 penalty was imposed. See link: <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/rules-enforcement/enforcement/enforcement-cases/108252> .

It appears that none of these penalties have been paid. Despite this, neither his 2023 F1¹, nor his 2022 F1², nor his 2021 F1³ disclose this debt.

Conclusion

I urge the PDC staff to take quick action and resolve the noncompliance identified in this complaint.

¹ <https://apollo.pdc.wa.gov/public/financial-affairs/statement/116181>

² <https://apollo.pdc.wa.gov/public/financial-affairs/statement/113486>

³ <https://apollo.pdc.wa.gov/public/financial-affairs/statement/116182>

Best,

/s/

Conner Edwards
(425) 533-1677 cell

Notice to Respondent

I apologize to you for any inconvenience caused by this complaint. The chance that you will actually be fined for the violations identified above is extremely small because the agency is averse to doing the work necessary to bring cases to hearings. Most likely this case – and any future cases against you – will simply be dismissed by staff.

This complaint is one of over one thousand complaints that I have filed to highlight and ultimately fix the significant shortcomings associated with the agency responsible for administering our state's campaign finance laws.

What are these shortcomings?

Overcomplicated and outdated requirements that are difficult to understand and comply with. Failure to properly educate the regulated community about the tasks they must perform to remain in compliance with applicable requirements and avoid complaints. Failure of the agency to send regular reminders to filers about pending deadlines. A failure to proactively enforce applicable requirements which enables the complaint system to become weaponized. Non-intuitive, non-user friendly, and buggy reporting software. Failure to meaningfully enforce core requirements. Failure to follow the best operating practices of other neighboring campaign finance agencies. An agency leadership structure that largely disregards stakeholder input and is slow to identify and resolve major agency deficiencies.

I believe that the best way to motivate the agency to address these problems is by filing a large number of complaints so that the agency's problems become impossible to ignore.

Slowly (too slowly) this strategy is starting to yield concrete and beneficial changes. You can read about these changes here: <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/why-one-man-filed-800-campaign-finance-complaints-against-wa-candidates/>

If you believe that the agency could have done something different to help you proactively avoid the issues identified in this complaint, I hope that you will consider including it in your response. The agency, and the public, can benefit from your perspective and feedback.

“You can’t make an omelet without breaking a few eggs.”
— François de Charette