



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

October 9, 2025

Delivered electronically to riverbranch@gmail.com

Subject: PDC Order, Case 173183

Dear Ellen Elizabeth Branch:

Enclosed is a copy of the Public Disclosure Commission's Order Imposing Fine that was entered in the above-referenced case.

At the September 25, 2025, Brief Enforcement hearing, the Presiding Officer assessed a total civil penalty of \$800, of which \$400 is suspended, in accordance with WAC 390-37-143. The \$400 non-suspended penalty is payable within 30 days of the date of this Order, which is **November 10, 2025**.

Online Payment Option:

To make an online payment please respond to the email accompanying this order requesting a payment link.

A payment link will be sent to you, in which you will need to provide the following information: (1) Case Number; and (2) Respondent Name. Processing fees may apply.

To mail a check or money order, make it payable to the "Washington State Treasurer" and be sure to include the PDC Case Number in the memorandum field.

For Regular Mail:

Public Disclosure Commission
PO Box 40908
Olympia, WA 98504-0908

For Overnight Mail or In-Person Delivery:

Public Disclosure Commission
711 Capitol Way S, STE 206
Olympia, WA 98501-1267

It is also ordered that you file the missing C-1 report within 30 days of this order.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. If you have questions, please contact us by email at pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Electronically Signed by Shelley Hines

PDC Staff

Enclosure: Initial Order

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**BEFORE THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

In Re: The Matter of Enforcement Action
Against:

PDC CASE NO. 173183

FINAL ORDER

ELLEN ELIZABETH BRANCH,

Respondent.

This matter was heard by the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (Commission) on September 25, 2025, by in-person, telephonic, and online streaming access. The hearing was held in accordance with Chapters 34.05 and 42.17A RCW, and Chapter 390-37 WAC.

Commissioners present were J. Robert Leach, Commission Chair (presiding); Douglass North, Commission Vice-Chair, and Commissioner James Oswald. Also present in-person were Assistant Attorney General John S. Meader representing the Commission, Assistant Attorney General Susie Giles-Klein, representing PDC Staff, and Shelley Hines, PDC Compliance Officer. Notice was provided to the Respondent and she did not appear on her own behalf. The proceedings were open to the public and recorded.

1 The Commissioners had before them the following materials:

- 2 • Amended Memorandum, dated September 25, 2025, prepared by Shelley Warnock, PDC
- 3 Compliance Officer;
- 4 • Enforcement Hearing Notice, PDC Case Number 173183, dated September 3, 2025, for
- 5 a September 25, 2025, enforcement hearing before the full Commission;
- 6 • Order Imposing Fine, PDC Case Number 139623, dated September 14, 2023.

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8 **I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

9 This matter involves allegations the Respondent violated RCW 42.17A.205 by failing to

10 file the required Candidate Registration (C-1 Report) due within 14 days of becoming a candidate

11 or no later than May 9, 2025, for the 2025 election year. The Respondent has one prior violation

12 with the PDC.

- 13
- 14 1. The Respondent was appointed School Board Director for Vashon School
- 15 District on March 28, 2024, and declared their candidacy on May 9, 2025, for
- 16 the 2025 election year.
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- 18 2. Between May 12 and May 27, 2025, PDC staff sent email reminders to all
- 19 registered candidates regarding their missing C-1 reports for election year 2025.
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- 21 3. On September 3, 2025, PDC staff emailed and mailed the Respondent a hearing
- 22 notice regarding the missing report for election year 2025. The notice was sent
- 23 to the Respondent's email and mailing addresses of record.
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4. As of the September 25, 2025, full Commission hearing, Respondent has not filed their C-1 report for election year 2025.

5. Respondent has one prior enforcement violation:

a. PDC Case 136923. Respondent was a candidate for School Director in Vashon School District and failed to file the required C-1 report that was due no later than June 4, 2023. At an August 17, 2023, Adjudicative Proceeding (Brief Enforcement Hearing), Respondent was found in violation of RCW 42.17A.205 and assessed a civil penalty of \$250, with \$100 suspended, provided the conditions of the order were met and there were no further violations for four years. To date, Respondent has not paid the outstanding \$250 civil penalty and the missing C-1 report for election year 2023 has not been filed.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over this proceeding pursuant to Chapter 42.17A. RCW, the State campaign finance and disclosure law; Chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act; and Title 390 WAC.
2. Pursuant to RCW 42.17A.205, a candidate for an election year must file a Candidate Registration (C-1 Report) within two weeks of declaring his candidacy for public office.

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2 **III. ORDER**

3 This Order will be the Final Order. After consideration of the mitigating and
4 aggravating factors, the Findings of Fact, and the Conclusions of Law, the Respondent is
5 assessed a civil penalty for failure to timely file the C-1 report of \$800, with \$400 suspended,
6 on the following conditions:

7
8 1. a. The non-suspended portion (\$400) of the \$800 civil penalty for
9 failure to file the C-1 report within two weeks of becoming a candidate
10 for the 2025 election year in violation of RCW 42.17A.205 is paid by
11 the Respondent within 30 days of the date of this Final Order.

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13 b. The Respondent files the missing C-1 reports for election years
14 2023 and 2025, and pays the delinquent civil penalty of \$250 (2023),
15 including any collection fees or costs within 30 days of the date of this
16 Final Order.

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18 c. The Respondent remains in full compliance with all PDC
19 reporting requirements and is not found to have committed any further
20 violations of Chapter 42.17A RCW or Title 390 WAC within four years
21 of the date of this Final Order. The suspended penalty shall not be
22 assessed based solely upon any remediable violation, minor violation, or
23 error classified by the Commission as appropriate to address by a
24 technical correction.

25 2. If the Respondent fails to meet the conditions in Section III(1) of this order within
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1 30 days of the date of this order, the suspended portion of the penalty for calendar
2 year 2025 shall immediately become due and the matter may be sent to collection
3 or brought to Superior Court as allowed by law without further action by the
4 Commission.

5
6 SO ORDERED this __9th__ day of October, 2025.

7 WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC
8 DISCLOSURE COMMISSION

9 FOR THE COMMISSION:

10 J. Robert Leach
J. Robert Leach (Oct 9, 2025 08:15:52 PDT)

11 _____
12 J. Robert Leach,
13 Chair, Public Disclosure Commission

14 *This order sent by email to:*

15 Ellen Elizabeth Branch, Respondent
riverbranch@gmail.com

16 Shelley Hines,
17 PDC Compliance Officer,
pdc@pdc.wa.gov

I, Shelley Hines, certify that I emailed a copy of this order
to the Respondent at his respective email address.

Shelley Hines
Shelley Hines (Oct 9, 2025 14:24:24 PDT)

Oct 9, 2025

Signed

Date

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3 **NOTICE: RECONSIDERATION**

4 Pursuant to the provisions of RCW 34.05.470 and WAC 390-37-150, you may file a Petition for
5 Reconsideration with the PDC within ten (10) days from the date this Final Order is served upon
6 you. Any Request for reconsideration must state the specific grounds for the relief requested.
7 Petitions must be delivered or mailed to the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission,
8 711 Capitol Way, Room 206, Box 40908, Olympia WA 98504-0908.

9 **NOTICE: PETITION FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW**

10 You have the right to appeal this Final Order to Superior Court, pursuant to the Petition for
11 Judicial Review provisions of RCW 34.05.542. Any Petition for Judicial Review of this Final
12 Order must be filed with the court and also served upon both the Commission and the Office of
13 the Attorney general within thirty (30) days after the date this Final Order is served upon you.
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