State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
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NOTE: ***On Jan. 1, 2026, Chapter 42.17A was recodified to Title 29B RCW***

May 7, 2026

Delivered electronically to gary.winston@rsd.edu.

Subject: PDC Case 184013 regarding Gary Winston

Gary Winston:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) completed its review of the complaint filed by Audry Byrd on January 7, 2026. The complaint alleged violation of RCW 29B.45.010 for use of public resources or facilities for the purpose of supporting or opposing a ballot measure.

Applicable Laws and Rules

RCW 29B.45.010 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 facilities (resources), directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting an election campaign or for the promotion of, or opposition to, any ballot proposition.

Background and Findings

- Gary Winston is an employee for Richland School District.
- The complaint alleged the use of public resources and facilities to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure by encouraging attendees at a district sporting event to "vote for the levy" in the upcoming election and posting a recording of the event on social media.
- On January 9, 2026, a copy of the complaint was sent to Respondent. The Richland School District Superintendent acknowledged that "vote for the levy" was stated during a halftime announcement by Gary Winston but asserted the intent was informational, not advocacy. The district recognized that the statement could be perceived as advocacy and took corrective action to ensure future compliance. The district further clarified that students were not directed to promote the levy and that the social media recording was made and posted by an off-duty employee acting in a personal capacity, without the use of district resources.
- It is PDC staff's determination in this instance encouraging spectators at a school sporting event to "vote for the levy" is considered advocacy and appears to be in violation of RCW 29B.45.010.

- The allegation concerning the social media post involved an employee's personal social media account, and no evidence was provided that public resources were used.
- The Respondent does not have previous warnings or violations of similar PDC requirements.

Summary and Resolution

Based on our findings, staff has determined that, in this instance, any violation that may have occurred was minor. After consideration of the circumstances, further proceedings would not serve the purpose of this chapter. Under WAC 390-37-060, the executive director, at any time prior to consideration by the commission, may dismiss a complaint which on its face, or as shown by investigation, provides reason to believe that a violation has occurred, but does not amount to a violation that warrants further investigation.

Pursuant to WAC 390-37-060(1)(d), however, you are receiving a formal written warning concerning use of public resources to support or oppose a candidate or ballot measure. Staff expects that you do not use public facilities or resources for the purpose of supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot measure in the future. The Commission will consider this formal written warning in deciding on further Commission action if there are future violations of PDC laws or rules.

Based on this information, the PDC has dismissed this matter in accordance with RCW 29B.60.020(1).

If you have questions, contact Colin Peeples at 1-877-601-2828 or by e-mail at pdc@pdc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Electronically signed by Colin Peeples
Colin Peeples
Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

Electronically signed by Peter Frey Lavallee
Peter Frey Lavallee
Executive Director

cc: Audry Byrd