



## 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](mailto:pdcc@pdcc.wa.gov) • Website: [www.pdca.wa.gov](http://www.pdca.wa.gov)

### **Public Disclosure Commission Statement of Understanding**

**Tarra Simmons**

**PDC Case 184074**

I, Tarra Simmons, as the representative of the Tarra Simmons Surplus Funds Committee (the Committee), hereby acknowledge that during calendar year 2025, while serving in the Washington State House of Representatives as the State Representative for District 23, Position 1, I violated RCW 42.17A.430<sup>1</sup> by improperly disposing of campaign surplus funds.

The facts are as follows:

- The Committee was registered on January 6, 2021, under the Full Reporting option. I am the Chair and Abbot Taylor is the Ministerial Treasurer of the Committee.
- On July 7, 2025, an expenditure from surplus funds was made to an entity identified as Better Minds Better Communities. The expenditure was classified as a donation in the amount of \$15,000. The financial activity was reported timely on August 11, 2025, on C-4 report #110306652, for the period of May 1 through July 31, 2025.
- A second expenditure from the surplus funds, for \$15,000, was made to Better Minds Better Communities, also as a donation, on August 18, 2025, and reported timely on September 10, 2025, for the period of August 1 through August 31, 2025.
- Better Minds Better Communities, Inc., registered with the Nevada Secretary of State, as a Nonprofit Corporation, on December 26, 2014. Records identify Jovan Jackson as the

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<sup>1</sup> Effective Jan. 1, 2026, Chapter 42.17A RCW was recodified to Title 29B RCW. Because the events at issue in this case occurred in 2025, this SOU cites to Chapter 42.17A.

primary Governor<sup>2</sup> for the nonprofit. The Nevada nonprofit registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a 501(c)(3), also on December 26, 2014. The nonprofit has also conducted business under the names Family Health Centers of Nevada and Better Mind Better Community Inc.

- I was introduced to Jovan Jackson in November 2024 through a mutual acquaintance and met with him in Nevada in December 2024. Mr. Jackson was elected to office in 2024 and would start his first session in the Nevada legislature a few weeks after the start of the 2025 legislative session in Washington state. I invited him to visit me at that time, which he did. Following those in-person meetings we continued virtual meetings throughout the Spring of 2025 discussing and planning ways to help formerly incarcerated people run for office, and I learned about Mr. Jackson's nonprofit, Better Minds Better Communities. Mr. Jackson and I also met in person in Nevada in May, Pennsylvania in June, and Massachusetts in August 2025.
- Abbot Taylor has been and is currently the Treasurer for both my campaign and surplus funds committees.
- When I initially approached Mr. Abbot about donating surplus funds to Better Minds Better Communities, he told me that surplus funds could not be expended to an out-of-state organization. At this point Mr. Jackson applied for nonprofit status in Washington using his established Nevada nonprofit Better Minds Better Communities.
- An entity identified as Better Minds Better Communities, DBA Better Together, registered with the Washington Secretary of State, as a Foreign Nonprofit Corporation, on July 3, 2025. The registration indicates the entity began doing business in the state on the same date. Jovan Jackson is listed as a Governor for the nonprofit, and I am the listed Registered Agent.<sup>3</sup>
- Following the registration of the nonprofit in Washington, Mr. Abbot made the requested donations to Better Minds Better Communities, and it was my and my treasurer's understanding that the contributions were legal.
- I did not personally benefit from the donations I made to Better Minds Better Communities.
- After being informed by PDC staff on January 29, 2026, that Better Minds Better Communities was not in the Washington Secretary of State's charitable organization

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<sup>2</sup> A governor of a nonprofit is an individual, usually a director or trustee, that is legally responsible for managing the organization's activities, assets, and direction. Governors hold fiduciary responsibility to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

<sup>3</sup> A nonprofit formed outside of Washington state is legally required to appoint a registered agent with a physical address in the state. A registered agent is a person or entity authorized to receive legal documents, official correspondence, and service of summons and lawsuits on behalf of the organization.

database, I informed Mr. Jackson about the requirement for the nonprofit to also be registered as a charitable organization in accordance with RCW 19.09<sup>4</sup>.

- On January 31, 2026, the nonprofit was registered in Washington state as a charitable organization<sup>5</sup>.
- The two \$15,000 contributions from my surplus funds account to Better Minds Better Communities did not constitute a proper use of surplus funds, because Better Minds Better Communities was not registered in accordance with RCW 19.09 at the time, as required by RCW 42.17A.430.

I would like to avoid the time and expense of a Brief Adjudicative Proceeding (Brief Enforcement Hearing). Therefore, in lieu of a hearing, I acknowledge that I violated Washington state law as described above and agree to enter this *Statement of Understanding* (SOU) to resolve the above matter with the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC).

In accordance with the Penalty Schedule adopted by the Commission for Brief Enforcement Hearings set forth in WAC 390-37-143, I agree to pay a \$300 penalty for a first occasion of an acknowledged violation of RCW 42.17A.430 for improper disposal of campaign surplus funds in 2025. In this instance, the donations from my campaign surplus funds, totaling \$30,000, made by me to Better Minds Better Communities are not required to be refunded by the entity nor reimbursed by me.

I understand that, by signing this SOU, I acknowledge the violation of Chapter 42.17A RCW set forth above and waive my right to a hearing in this matter. I further understand that signing this SOU and returning it to the PDC with a payment for the \$300 civil penalty will resolve the issue of improper disposal of campaign surplus funds in 2025 as indicated above.



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Tarra Simmons

April 28, 2026

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Date Signed

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<sup>4</sup> RCW 42.17A.430 states in part, that surplus funds may be disposed of by donating to a charitable organization registered in accordance with chapter 19.09 RCW.

<sup>5</sup> RCW 19.09.020(2) defines “charitable organization” as “any entity that solicits or collects contributions from the general public where the contribution is or is purported to be used to support a charitable purpose.” For the purpose of the definition, “charitable” is used in its generally accepted legal sense. Chapter 19.09 RCW does provide for exemptions for being registered with the Washington Secretary of State as a charitable organization but for the purpose of RCW 42.17A.430 it is understood the intent of the law is to not allow for registration exemptions. If an entity solicits or accepts a donation of campaign surplus funds, the entity must be a registered charitable organization in Washington state.