



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

BEFORE THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

KAREN STEELE
SENSIBLE SPENDING ON OUR SCHOOLS
17837 1ST AVENUE SOUTH #276
NORMANDY PARK, WA 98148

In Re Compliance with RCW 42.17A

Sensible Spending on Our Schools

Respondent.

PDC Case No. 15-044

Findings of Fact,
Conclusions of Law, and
Order Imposing Fine

A brief enforcement hearing (brief adjudicative proceeding) was held on April 23, 2015, in Room 206, Evergreen Plaza Building, 711 Capitol Way, Olympia, Washington to consider whether the Respondent violated RCW 42.17A.205 by failing to timely file a Political Committee Registration (C-1pc report) as a political committee opposing Proposition 1, a school construction bond measure on the November 4, 2014 general election ballot in the Highline School District.

The hearing was held in accordance with Chapters 34.05 and 42.17A RCW and Chapter 390-37 WAC. A brief enforcement hearing notice was sent to Sensible Spending on Our Schools, in care of Karen Steele, on April 13, 2015. Commission Chair Grant Degginger was the Presiding Officer. The Commission staff was represented by Phil Stutzman, Director of Compliance. The Respondent appeared in person and participated in the hearing by providing testimony to the Presiding Officer.

Having considered the evidence, the Presiding Officer finds as follows:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On June 4, 2014, the Highline School District Board of Directors adopted a resolution placing Proposition 1, a school construction bond ballot measure, on the November 4, 2014 general election ballot. Proposition 1 was defeated in that election.
2. The Respondent was a first-time political committee in 2014, opposing Proposition 1.

3. On December 1, 2014, the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) received a complaint signed on October 7, 2014 by Lois Schipper, alleging that Sensible Spending on Our Schools had failed to register and report as a political committee opposing Proposition 1. PDC staff opened a formal investigation on January 9, 2015.
4. On January 20, 2015, the Respondent filed a C-1pc report registering as a political committee opposing Proposition 1. The Respondent selected the Mini Reporting Option, and listed Karen Steele as its only committee officer and principal decision maker.
5. Ms. Steele stated that she contacted PDC staff in August of 2014 and spoke with a woman who asked her if she was going to raise money from others to support her efforts, to which she replied, "*that was not my intention.*" Ms. Steele said she was told by PDC staff that she did not need to file with the PDC, but that she should contact the Department of Revenue, which she did. PDC staff has no record of advising Ms. Steele to contact the Department of Revenue and would not customarily give such advice.
6. Shortly after speaking with PDC staff in August 2014, Ms. Steele received a contribution in support of the Respondent's efforts. Beginning on or around August 13, 2014, the Respondent received 25 contributions totaling \$3,455, and made expenditures totaling \$1,232 in opposition to Proposition 1.
7. PDC staff has no record of being contacted by Ms. Steele after the Respondent began to receive contributions and make expenditures. The Respondent filed its C-1pc report 146 days late, and more than two months after the November 4, 2014 election.
8. Ms. Steele stated that she deposited all funds received on behalf of the Respondent in a segregated bank account, and kept meticulous records of all financial activities. She said she would have filed with the PDC in October 2014 had she been informed of the need to do so.
9. The Respondent properly and timely filed a C-1pc to register its campaign to oppose a similar ballot proposition on the February 10, 2015 special election ballot in the Highline School District.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the above facts, as a matter of law, the Presiding Officer concludes as follows:

1. This matter was duly and properly convened and all jurisdictional, substantive and procedural requirements have been satisfied.
2. The Respondent violated RCW 42.17A.205 by failing to timely file a C-1pc Political Committee Registration for its campaign in opposition to Proposition 1 in the November 4, 2014 general election.

ORDER

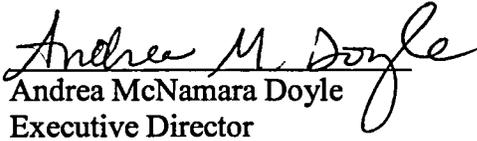
ON the basis of the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law,

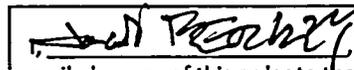
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the Respondent is assessed a \$150 civil penalty. Of that amount, \$50 is suspended on the condition that the Respondent commits no further violations of RCW 42.17A for a period of two years from the date of this order. The \$100 non-suspended portion of the penalty is due within 30 days of the date of this order.

This is an **Initial Order** of the Public Disclosure Commission.

Entered this 28th day of April, 2015.

Public Disclosure Commission


Andrea McNamara Doyle
Executive Director

 certify that I mailed a copy of this order to the Respondent/Applicant at his/her respective address postage pre-paid on the date stated herein.

Enclosure: Information about Appeal Rights