



**State of Washington
PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION**

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June 5, 2018

Delivered electronically to "candydrollinger@gmail.com"

Subject: Complaint regarding Michael E. Haas, Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney –

Dear Candace Lee Drollinger:

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) has completed its initial review of the complaint you filed on March 12, 2018. Your complaint alleged that Michael E. Haas, Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney, may have violated RCW 42.17A.555 by using the public facilities of his office to assist his 2018 re-election campaign, in violation of RCW 42.17A.555. Your complaint alleged that for the past year Mr. Haas has pressured Julie St. Marie, Chief Criminal Deputy Prosecutor, to support him because "his opponent will fire her" if Mr. Haas is not re-elected. You also alleged that Mr. Haas has pressured Ms. St. Marie to attend campaign functions, put his campaign sign in her yard, and display his campaign button. You also stated that Ms. St. Marie feels uncomfortable because she is an "at will" employee, and Mr. Haas can fire her at any time.

PDC staff reviewed your allegations, and as a result of staff's initial review, we found the following:

- On March 22, 2018, PDC staff received a request from you to withdraw your complaint, on the basis that the Chief Deputy Prosecutor, Julian St. Marie, was not consulted before the complaint was filed, and wanted no part in it.
- On March 22, 2018, PDC staff received a request from Julian St. Marie to withdraw the complaint and remove it from the PDC website.
- PDC staff did not accept your request to withdraw your complaint or remove it from the PDC website.
- Ms. St. Marie said the complaint consisted of second-hand allegations concerning conversations she had with Mr. Haas. Ms. St. Marie said she and Mr. Haas have been friends for many years, and she does not believe he violated the spirit or letter of the law with respect to electioneering or campaign conduct. She said she has always understood that as Chief Deputy she serves at the pleasure of the elected prosecutor.
- Ms. St. Marie said statements made by Mr. Haas in the office relating to the 2018 election were general statements about the reality of working for an elected official, and were not specific about what would happen if a new prosecutor is elected.

- Mr. Haas said he believed the allegations were the result of misunderstandings or misperceptions on your part. Mr. Haas confirmed that he and Ms. St. Marie are good friends who have known each other for about ten years, and worked together closely prior to when he was elected Jefferson County Prosecutor.
- Mr. Haas said he tells all deputy prosecuting attorneys he hires that he can only protect them for as long as he is in office. He said that is not meant to pressure them into acting one way or another, but to advise them of the realities of being a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney.
- Mr. Haas denied pressuring Ms. St. Marie to support him in his bid for re-election, attend campaign functions, put a sign in her yard, or display his campaign button. He acknowledged that he told Ms. St. Marie it might be useful for her to participate in local political meetings or join a service group if she was interested in a political career. He said he did not recall discussing his campaign with Ms. St. Marie at work. He said if he did talk about a hypothetical campaign, it would have been during a break from working. He said that with respect to the button issue, he did jokingly hand Ms. St. Marie a campaign button, but said he doubted Ms. St. Marie would feel he was pressuring her. He also acknowledged saying something in jest that if they both lost their jobs, they could always open a practice together. He said only Ms. St. Marie could say whether she perceived this action as an attempt to pressure her to support his campaign.
- On May 22, 2018, staff spoke with Ms. St. Marie again. She indicated that she is becoming increasingly uncomfortable with comments about what could happen if Mr. Haas is not re-elected. She also indicated that Mr. Haas inadvertently solicited the Deputy Prosecutors for contributions to his campaign, but then realized his mistake and withdrew his request.
- Mr. Haas has not received previous warnings or been found in violation of PDC laws in the past.

Based on these initial findings, staff has determined that in this instance, there is insufficient evidence to support a finding of a material violation warranting further investigation. However, staff will remind Mr. Haas of the prohibition against using public facilities to assist his campaign, and the prohibition against soliciting his employees for campaign contributions.

The PDC has closed the matter, and will not be conducting a more formal investigation into your complaint or pursuing further enforcement action in this case.

If you have questions, you may contact Phil Stutzman at 1-360-664-8853 toll-free at 1-877-601-2828, or by e-mail at phil.stutzman@pdc.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

/s _____
Phil Stutzman
Sr. Compliance Officer

Endorsed by,

/s _____
Barbara Sandahl
Deputy Director
For Peter Lavallee
Executive Director

cc: Michael E. Haas, Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney – Incumbent