

A Short Story About

Vote No SKSD Levy Signs

And WHO "Might" own them



The Moral of this Story:

"Always Measure Twice & Cut Once!"

(Or how "South Kitsap School Supporters" thought they solved the crimes of the signs)

Supporters of South Kitsap School (SSKS) recently submitted a complaint to the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) related to the upcoming SKSD levy request (see complaint submitted below). It is alleged that Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools (CSSKS) posted Vote NO Levy Signs. Interestingly enough these No Levy Signs have been removed, some defaced (see photo below) and then replaced with SKKS Vote Yes Levy Signs. Keep in mind that SKKS is the sole registered political action committee that works with our school district to try and pass bonds and levies.

The Public Disclosure Commission did look into Gerry Austin, (SSKS Treasurer's) allegations and essentially found them all without any merit, noting that CSSKS is not required to do anything, not register as a political action committee, etc. That decision letter is forthcoming soon. Before this decision

was made, a community member made inquires to local government as to whether or not these government entities had been removing Vote No signs. All local government entities asked responded in the negative. Well, this was enough to now for Mr. Austin to now assign "new guilt" as to how has been putting up Vote No signs. The proverbial "Ah-Ha" moment !

SSKS states CSSKS did not place the signs and thus is alleging that the person asking why Vote NO Levy Signs were being removed (and subsequently being replaced with Vote Yes Levy Signs) is in fact the guilty party. Of course Mr. Austin had file yet another PDC complaint to make this abundantly clear to everyone. PDC has not yet finished its "investigation" into these additional allegations by Mr. Austin.

The signs at the "Heart" of the Dispute



SSKS Treasurer Gerry Austin alleged Violation of RCW 42.17A.205, .235, .240 for failure to timely register (PDC Form C-1pc), failure to timely report contributions, in-kind, expenditures, loans and debts (PDC Forms C-3 & C-4)(EY21, Dec20)

Respondent Name
Citizens Supporting South Kitsap School District
Complainant Name
Gerry Austin
Complaint Description
Gerry and Cammy (Sun, 13 Dec 2020 at 12:03 PM) The organization "Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools" has established themselves as the Committee Against the Feb 2021 SKSD Levy and had made expenditures to influence the election through placement of signs, without registering, as required by Washington State Law. Mr. [REDACTED], a current SKSD director, and Mr. [REDACTED], have previously made public statements indicating their involvement with this organization.
What impact does the alleged violation(s) have on the public?
<p>The organization "Citizens who support South Kitsap Schools" is maintaining a website https://citizensupportingsouthkitsapschooldistrict.com/index.html against the February 2021 South Kitsap School District Levy. Additionally, this group has been placing signs in the South Kitsap regions stating "SKSD, NO NEW TAXES, NO BONDS, NO LEVIES" misleading voters on two counts; 1) No bonds are proposed on the Feb 2021 ballot, and 2) the Levy is being renewed at the current rate, thus it is not a 'new tax'. Prior to these signs being placed, this organization placed a different set of similar signs in the region in July 2020, well in advance of even discussions of Levy renewal by the School Board, opposing all future ballot measures. No affiliation or indication of who placed the signs is printed on the signs. Total quantity of signs placed is estimated to be 50-100 in total, placed in public right of way, not solely on private property, indicating expenditures well above reporting thresholds for the purpose of influencing the 2021 Levy election.</p> <p>This group represents themselves as "The Committee against the SKSD 2021 Levy" on their website, yet is not registered with the PDC, and is maintaining an anonymous presence, masking the identify of individuals involved while making expenditures. WHOIS Domain registry search information shows "redacted for privacy" and is registered through a Dutch Web Domain Registrar.</p> <p>Additionally, this group, which has existed for at least 18 months, has previously used false names, posting under the name [REDACTED] on Facebook public forums, who is not a real person.</p>
List of attached evidence or contact information where evidence may be found
Contact information on website does not work, no phone listed, only publicly available e-mail address is cssksch@gmail.com . https://citizensupportingsouthkitsapschooldistrict.com/index.html

Mr. [REDACTED] identified himself as affiliated with this group on April 2, 2020 via a letter to the Kitsap Sun. <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2020/04/02/south-kitsap-board-avoiding-our-questions/5115792002/>

The Kitsap sun reported Nov 5th, 2019 that Mr. [REDACTED], currently a SKSD Director, was involved with this group <https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/local/2019/11/05/most-incumbents-prevail-kitsap-school-board-races/4172892002/>

List of potential witnesses with contact information to reach them

Both Mr. [REDACTED], a current SKSD director, and Mr. [REDACTED], a frequent participant in public meetings, have referenced and indicated support for this organization, and have submitted letters on this groups behalf to Superintendent Tim Winter, which have been discussed during public meeting. Mr. [REDACTED] campaign page from two years ago used identical stock images and a page design similar to the page and Facebook group used by Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools at the time, which was launched in parallel with Mr. [REDACTED] campaign for school board. This indicates a strong likelihood that he is highly involved and engaged with this group, and not just a participant. While his campaign page is no longer active, and archived version of his previous campaign page is viewable through the internet archive, archive.org.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20200808113944/http://www.electjeffdailyforsksbdistrict5.com/>

Potential witnesses with more information are;

Superintendent Tim Winter, SKSD - 360-874-7000

President Eric Gattenby of the SKSD School Board - gattenbye@skschools.org

John Richardson, SKEA President - 360-871-4149

Certification (Complainant)

I certify (or declare) under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that information provided with this complaint is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Encl (1)

Relevant Elements of Gerry and Cammy's Complaints Addressed

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Reply from: Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools

From: [REDACTED] Member of CSSKS
To: Ms. Tabitha Townsend, PDC Compliance Coordinator
Subj: Reply to claims CSSKS is not in compliance with RCW 42.16 A.205, .235 and .240.

Dear Tabitha,

Thank you for providing the PDC toolkit link/matrix to help in determining if CSSKS is, or is not a PAC. Based on my reading of these, it is my opinion that CSSKS is not a PAC and therefore has no reporting requirements per PDC rules and regulations.

Here are responses to the entire set of SSKS allegations received from you on 12-18-20.

- The Committee Against the SKSD 2021 Levy does not have a website so Citizens Supporting South Kitsap School offered to post their information on our website.
- Their webpage will be taken down by Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools at the end of this ballot election.
- We were informed that the Committee submitted the opposition statement to Kitsap County Elections Division.
- The only expenditures I have made have been to keep the domain named Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools active. It was established in late 2018.
- Our group has not authorized the purchase or placement of any signs.
- Our group has never accepted or solicited any monies since being established.
- Mr. [REDACTED] had been involved with the Citizens group from the very start, and has Publicly stated his opposition to the SKSD 2021 Levy.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools

(CSSKS has no affiliations with SSKS)

Encl (1)

Elements of SSKS PDC Complaint