

Legislative Ethics Board



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COMPLAINT 2025 – NO. 3 *In re House Democratic Caucus* April 10, 2025

NO SUBJECT MATTER JURISDICTION – ORDER OF DISMISSAL

I. NATURE OF COMPLAINT

The Complaint alleges that Respondent violated the Ethics Act by blocking him on the House Democratic Caucus's Twitter account.

II. BACKGROUND

Complaint 2025 – No. 3 was received on February 7, 2025, and discussed at the Board's regularly scheduled meeting on March 31, 2025.

III. JURISDICTION

The Board has personal jurisdiction but lacks subject matter jurisdiction. RCW 42.52.320.

IV. FINDINGS OF FACT

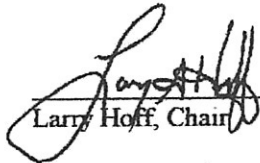
1. The Respondent is the House Democratic Caucus (HDC).
2. On January 23, 2024, the HDC posted a link about abortion and reproductive health care on its official caucus Twitter page.
3. In response, Complainant posted in the comments the following: "No person may intentionally perform or induce, or attempt to perform or induce, an abortion."
4. Complainant received the following message "@WAHouseDems has blocked you."
5. Travis Shofner indicated that the HDC has a policy that no person should be blocked from the HDC's social media accounts.
6. In reviewing the HDC social media accounts, Mr. Shofner discovered that, in addition to the Complainant, several other people had been inadvertently blocked. It is not clear how this happened but all the people who had been blocked were unblocked including the Complainant.

V. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The issue presented in this Complaint is not an ethics issue. It is either a constitutional issue involving the First Amendment or it is an issue involving a violation of House policy. The Board has been clear in past matters that it will not rule on constitutional issues. *In re Haigh*, 2000- No. 8; *In re Cody*, 2014 - No. 1. Furthermore, RCW 42.52.320 limits the jurisdiction of the Ethics Board to enforcement of the Act and rules adopted under it with respect to legislators and legislative branch employees. Based upon the specific facts as presented in this complaint, the Board lacks subject matter jurisdiction.

VI. ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that: the Board lacks subject matter jurisdiction in this matter and the Complaint is dismissed.



Larry Hoff, Chair

4/10/2025

Date