



CITIZEN OUTREACH FOUNDATION

Putting the Public Back in Public Policy

October 6, 2023

Nevada Secretary of State
101 N. Carson Street, Suite 3
Carson City, NV 89701

To Whom It May Concern:

On May 11, 2023, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported...

“(Nevada) State Sen. Dina Neal is under investigation following claims she pressured a college professor to direct federal funds for local businesses into the pockets of unqualified companies, including one owned by her friend, records and emails show.”

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/investigations/nevada-state-senator-steered-federal-grant-to-friend-complaint-states-2775682>

On May 25, 2023, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported...

“North Las Vegas city officials met with law enforcement this week to discuss concerns that state Sen. Dina Neal may have used campaign funds to pay off a \$20,000 lien on her home, the Las Vegas Review-Journal has learned.”

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/investigations/source-nlv-officials-met-with-authorities-about-state-senators-finances-2783486>

According to the second article, red flags were raised because the City of North Las Vegas sent Ms. Neal a letter in April 2021 demanding payment for a \$20,000 Home Buyer Assistance Program loan she took out.

The article notes that Ms. Neal reported on her Contributions and Expense Report (C&E) a payment of \$20,499 “for Zoom expenses” just a month later, on May 24, 2021,

Her attorney, Brad Schrager, characterized that entry as an “obvious” typo; that the correct amount should have been \$204.99. Ms. Neal subsequently “provided the Review-Journal a receipt that shows a Zoom charge from May 24, 2021, in that amount.”

While this may very well have been a simple typo – which has subsequently been corrected on an amended C&E report – the timing and suspiciously coincidental nature of the mistake would seem to call for a more thorough investigation, including a request for bank records to confirm the payment amount rather than just a receipt from Zoom, and I hereby request such further investigation by your office.

In addition, a subsequent Review-Journal article on September 11, 2023, reported...

“An embattled North Las Vegas state senator (Ms. Neal) formed a legal defense fund just months after the Review-Journal revealed she was under investigation for allegedly directing funds to unqualified companies, records show.”

<https://www.reviewjournal.com/news/politics-and-government/nevada/embattled-state-senator-created-legal-defense-fund-in-august-2909250>

According to the article, as well as the Statement of Formation report filed with the Secretary of State’s office, Ms. Neal set up the account for herself as the “Candidate or Office Holder” and named herself as the “Administrator.”

The “Description of Claim or Legal Proceeding” is listed simply and generally as follows...

“The fund is being created to pay for legal defense fund.”

As the Review-Journal noted, when asked why “the fund’s formation could be nonspecific about which legal challenge the funds would be used to defend against, a spokesperson from the secretary of state’s office said the agency has

historically not proactively audited campaign finance documents, which are only more closely scrutinized if a complaint is filed.”

Please accept this letter as just such a complaint requesting the Secretary of State’s office conduct a thorough investigation of the formation of this defense fund based on, but not limited to, these two areas of inquiry...

1.) Was the fund set up to pay Mr. Schrager to deal with the “typo” issue related to the C&E report, or was it set up to pay for legal expenses related to the allegations that “she pressured a college professor to direct federal funds for local businesses into the pockets of unqualified companies”?

Or was the fund set up to pay for both? Or for another legal matter unrelated to the two already detailed by the Review-Journal that may not be public yet?

2.) According to the Review-Journal article, “a legal defense fund is an account created to cover legal costs, including attorney’s fees, incurred by a candidate or public officer in the course of a campaign, the electoral process, or during the performance of their official duties.”

Arguably, a fund set up to pay the legal fees for her attorney to correct a “typo” on her C&E – though I’d suggest that’s a matter for her bookkeeper, not her lawyer – would be considered an issue related to “the performance of (her) official duties.”

However, the articles I’ve read on this matter do NOT indicate the allegations of pressuring “a college professor to direct federal funds for local businesses into the pockets of unqualified companies” were related to her official duties as a state legislator.

In fact, according to the May 11 Review-Journal article, Ms. Neal characterized Donovan McIntosh, the individual she allegedly pressured the professor to award a grant to, as just a “friend” who she did “favors” for.

Those favors reportedly include hiring him as her late father’s “personal trainer,” helping his daughter get an apartment after she was denied “due to a prostitution charge,” “helping him with identity theft issues,” and “bringing him soup after his neck surgery.”

None of these would seem to be related to the performance of her official duties that would justify the establishment of a legal defense fund.

In fact, the Review-Journal reports that Ms. Neal represents North Las Vegas while Mr. McIntosh is registered to vote at a home he owns in Henderson. So she can't even justify her actions as helping a "constituent."

In addition, the Review-Journal reports that Ms. Neal and Mr. McIntosh "exchanged about 8,000 calls and texts over the past three years, which averages to about seven a day." This indicates a relationship well beyond that of "friends" or a "constituent."

If Ms. Neal's actions on behalf of Mr. McIntosh were conducted in her capacity as a private individual and not part of her official duties, the establishment of a legal defense fund would seem wholly inappropriate.

As such, I ask the Secretary of State's office to investigate the creation of this fund and determine if it is allowable under state law.

Respectfully,



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President

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