

Related to actions taken that can serve to discredit IPRTF members and other Justice Project participants

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immigrationboard@cob.org

Date: Tuesday, September 19, 2023, 04:31 PM PDT

Dear Whatcom County Council:

I recently started looking at the Yes! Safe Jail, Healthy Outcomes website. It is a group that alternates in being referred to as a political action committee and a campaign, and it supports the November 2023 ballot measure sales tax. I noticed that County Council Chair Buchanan and Council Member Kershner are listed as a committee members.

This information has prompted me to write to you all today because there was [a guest commentary article published on September 15, 2023 in Cascadia Daily News](#) that was co-written by the Chair of Yes! Safe Jail, Healthy Outcomes, Peter Frazier, and the Co-chair of Whatcom County's Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force, Stephen Gockley, in which assertions were made that, among other things, opponents to the November 2023 ballot measure

sales tax "provide no guidance for expanding treatment capacity quickly or building facilities for new services," and that they have a "treatment-but-not-jail" approach.

I wrote a post for my blog site detailing numerous examples of how assertions in the 9/15/23 commentary - which cast the guidance and contributions toward treatment and facilities for new services of 2023 sales tax opponents universally in a negative light - are inaccurate. Here is a link to that

post: <https://noisywatersnw.com/2023/09/17/injustice-in-whatcom-county-the-push-to-marginalize-continues-noisy-waters-northwest/>

Furthermore, the assertions in the commentary do a deep disservice and can serve to marginalize many people who are opposed to the sales tax for meaningful reasons, including some who faithfully participated in the Justice Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force.

I know from meeting minutes and video that the County Council Chair was present at virtually all of the meetings where some of the 2023 sales tax opponents have made invaluable contributions toward speeding up and developing guidance for treatment capacity and building facilities for new services while supporting efforts to come to an agreement regarding the quality, size, and location

of a a new jail facility, among their many other important contributions to the Justice Project and preventing and reducing incarceration.

I also want to point out that some of the people serving in the positions I have noted above are members of already marginalized communities, and that there may be members of communities who have experienced such discrimination who are both opponents to the 2023 ballot measure sales tax and are also those who have offered their experienced input during Justice Project focus groups.

I encourage all County Council Members and Whatcom County IPRTF members to remind themselves of the part of the IPRTF meeting's Land Acknowledgement which says, "We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. We pay respect to their elders past and present. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that bring us together here today. And please join us in uncovering such truths at any and all public events."

Regardless of any Council Members' positions on the 2023 sales tax, I hope you continue to strive to bridge divides with all people regardless of *their* positions on the 2023 sales tax, and work together with them for the well-being of the community. It also will be powerful toward that end, to be true to the level of integrity you have shown in various

commendable endeavors by making amends for harm done, as in this case, by unsubstantiated aspersions that have been cast on your community members and associates, and by making meaningful efforts to help ensure that any group which you decide to remain part of does not continue to do such harm.

Sincerely,

Dena Jensen

Birch Bay, WA

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Seeking to prevent future violations of RCW 42.17A.555

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office@whatcompjc.org; c2cinfo@foodjustice.org;
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phab@co.whatcom.wa.us

Date: Friday, October 13, 2023, 06:45 PM PDT

Dear Incarceration Prevention and Reduction Task Force:

I am sending this to help raise awareness so that future violations of either the letter or spirit of [RCW 42.17A.555](#) don't occur. I am particularly concerned about situations where members of any local government body are warned in the early part of a meeting about the RCW, and a potential violation occurs without any questioning of the occurrence, while subsequent to that, a warning about the RCW is then issued again in the same meeting right before public comment would occur.

<https://noisywatersnw.com/2023/10/13/satpal-sidhu-responds-to-pdc-complaint-regarding-2023-ballot-measure-to-fund-whatcom-jail-noisy-waters-northwest/>

I call on you all to take action and help raise awareness related to the critical importance of following all rules and practices meant to safeguard and promote non-discriminatory participation in open public meetings.

Sincerely,

Dena Jensen

Birch Bay, WA

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