

04 June 2012

Regional Inspector General
Department of Housing and Urban Development
Houston Sub-Office
Room 2200
1301 Fannin
Houston, TX 77002
Telephone number: (713) 718-3199
Sent via fax to: (713) 718-3249

Dear Sir/Madame:

Cc: see list below

Re: Misuse of Federal Funds

We need your help!

Employees of the Galveston Housing Authority (GHA) have contacted the Galveston Open Government Project (GOGP) to report the misuse of federal funds. Often, the timing of the official reaction to this type of problem is not that important, but, in this case, timing is critical, because these electioneering activities are allegedly aimed at influencing the 23 June runoff election in the City of Galveston!

We assume that even if your office began an investigation today, you would not possibly have the time to get far enough into it to do anything meaningful before election day, so the purpose of this letter is to ask you to consider doing something that can help to safe guard the integrity of the runoff election.

The GOP sent [this letter](#) to GHA Board Chair, Betty Massey, on 25 May with the request that it be forwarded to all GHA employees, but we have not received confirmation that it was widely circulated, or that a public notice has been posted notifying them of their rights under Chapter 554 of the Texas Code.

Rather than trying to contain any electioneering activities, the GHA appears to have exiled their Public Information Officer, Justin Herter, from GHA headquarters for merely sending [this email](#) where he asked his superiors to look at the fact that the GHA at least appeared to be involved in activities aimed at influencing the local election. [This GOP email](#) reviewed the events surrounding this apparent “adverse personnel action” that seems to be in retaliation for the above-mentioned email in violation of Chapter 554 of the Texas Code.

The Galveston City Council was also copied on our letter, but this GHA Board has been defying the City Council for so long that it is highly doubtful that they would cooperate with any oversight efforts by the Council, which is why your help is so critical.

Therefore, the GOP would like to request that your office send a letter to the GHA Board that outlines the jeopardy attached to the misuse of federal funds, and the protection offered to those who want to report such activities to your office under federal Whistleblower laws. If such a letter was delivered to ALL GHA employees and printed in the Galveston County Daily News and posted on Guidry News, GHA employees would be well informed about what was acceptable and what was unlawful and most should have no desire to cross the line; especially when they couldn't be sure who might be a Whistleblower!

Information and exposure are the primary tools available to us to ensure that the upcoming election is not compromised.

Our letter to the GHA employees was sent to the Galveston County Daily News, Guidry News, and the Houston Chronicle on 25 May. Guidry News posted it, but so far, the Galveston County

Daily News and the Houston Chronicle have not covered this story. Will they ever do so?

On 29 May, our letter was sent to the Texas Tribune, Texas Watchdog, and Wayne Dolcefino. They have expressed an interest in the story.

Certainly, a letter from your office explaining that electioneering is a federal crime, when it involves the misuse of federal funds, that your office takes public corruption very seriously, and that you will vigorously investigate and prosecute it, as time permits, will go a long way towards ensuring a fair and untainted election. In addition, it is very likely that a letter from your office will be well covered by the media creating the kind of widespread exposure of this issue needed to safeguard the election.

In response to the investigation currently being conducted by the GOP, the GHA issued a press release on 01 June where they stated, *“The GHA welcomes any and all investigations into these untrue allegations.”* It is our hope that the OIG will take them up on their offer!

<http://www.ghatx.org/ShowNews.aspx?NewsId=105>

We will be happy to talk to you and your staff to furnish more details about the violations involved.

Respectfully submitted,

David Stanowski
President
Galveston Open Government Project, Inc.
GOGP@att.net
409-621-2099

Cc:

Galveston County District Attorney, Galveston City Council, Galveston Housing Authority Commissioners, Congressman Ted Poe, Commissioner Jerry Patterson, Congressman Darrell Issa, Attorney General Gregg Abbott, Executive Director, Texas Ethics Commission, David Reisman, Governor Rick Perry.

Galveston County Daily News, Guidry News, The Houston Chronicle, Texas Tribune, Texas Watchdog, Wayne Dolcefino.