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FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA
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ANGELA B. COREY
STATE ATTORNEY

June 7, 2016

Carlos Slay
54161 Jerra Road
Callahan, FL 32011

RE: Complaint regarding Nassau County
Tax Collector

Dear Mr. Slay:

I am in receipt of your letter requesting an investigation of Nassau County Tax Collector John Drew. You request review of a variety of alleged acts of the Tax Collector and his Office which have been the subject of local newspaper articles or are matters that have been or are under review by other entities such as the Florida Ethics Commission or the Nassau County School Board. The allegations you raise in your letter have been shown to be inaccurate, generally without merit or otherwise made with reckless disregard of the truth and are not the subject of further review by the State Attorney's Office.

The Nassau County School Board examined the propriety of the contract for services awarded to Dr. Catherine Drew and Florida Psychological Associates. The School Board found no impropriety. Dr. Drew is not prohibited from bidding for a government contract merely because her husband is the current Tax Collector. Dr. Drew and Tax Collector Drew's marriage is known within the community. Your effort to "link" claims of School Board campaign contributions to violations of Florida's Sunshine law is little more than a circuitous impermissible stacking of inferences and innuendo.

Similarly, John Drew, nor his wife, are prohibited from advocating funding from the Florida Legislature for local and community programs which are of interest or benefit to the citizens of Nassau County. Neither Tax Collector Drew, nor his wife, are "lobbyists" as that term is defined in section 11.045, F.S., and have committed no such associated lobbying violations as you allege.

The Nassau County Tax Collector's Office has been independently audited for the last seven years by certified public accountants. On each occasion the auditing firm concluded the Tax Collector complied with his statutory

requirements as set forth by Florida law. The claims of financial management or improper use of Tax Collector funds are refuted by years of successive audits determining lawful compliance by the Tax Collector. The audits are public record and I trust you would have reviewed them before making your claims. Similarly, your claims regarding inappropriate expenditures and improper credit card usage are without merit.

In your letter you claim Tax Collector Drew failed to take due care in protecting public records. As for alleged public records violations, Chapter 119, F.S., sets forth the various remedies relating to such claims. If you believe you have been aggrieved by the Tax Collector regarding Florida's Public Records law you have a civil remedy. I am satisfied with the explanation provided by the Tax Collector's IT Director regarding the Tax Collector's IT storage and retention and do not believe there is any evidence of a civil or criminal public records violation.

The sexual harassment claim is known within the County. The matter was handled by the County Attorney and settled through the appropriate civil or administrative employment process. To my knowledge, there is no underlying criminal conduct for my Office to review related to this settled matter.

Finally, and most disturbingly, you accuse the Tax Collector of improperly storing his personal property on County property. In particular, you allege vessels are improperly stored on the property. Having worked in Nassau County the last several years I have driven past those vessels on countless occasions. I recognized them immediately to be the property of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The Executive Director of the Commission prepared an affidavit acknowledging ownership of the vessels and you are aware of the ownership of the vessels.

In closing, you are a declared candidate for Nassau County Tax Collector and such a candidacy carries with it a responsibility to remain informed of not only Florida's campaign laws, but of basic facts regarding your opponent. I caution you that Florida law imposes such a responsibility and sets for a punishment for ignoring its admonition. Section 104.271, F.S., provides in relevant part:

False or malicious charges against, or false statements about, opposing candidates; penalty.—

(1) Any candidate who, in a primary election or other election, willfully charges an opposing candidate participating in such election with a violation of any provision of this code, which charge is known by the candidate making such charge to be false or malicious, is guilty of a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083 and, in addition, after conviction shall be disqualified to hold office.

I consider this matter closed and I am taking no further action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Siegel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "S" at the beginning.

Stephen Siegel
Sr. Division Chief
Nassau County

