

PRESS RELEASE

Former Ethics Commission Attorney Pays \$1,000 Penalty

January 21, 2009

The Enforcement Division of the Office of State Ethics (OSE) entered a consent order on January 20, 2009 with Maureen Duggan, previously a Principal Attorney at the former State Ethics Commission, and now employed by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Duggan paid a \$1,000 civil penalty for failing to conduct herself, while employed by the State Ethics Commission, in a manner which promotes the integrity and impartiality of the Commission.

Specifically, in August 2004, Duggan drafted a now well-known, “anonymous” letter to the Commissioners of the State Ethics Commission setting forth a number of issues regarding the work practices of the former agency’s Executive Director and staff. Duggan used deliberate misspellings of words in the letter to conceal her identity as the author, and continued to mislead others as to the true source of the letter, including in an affidavit, signed under oath, to the Auditors of Public Accounts.

By sending a letter about the State Ethics Commission that falsely claimed to be anonymous and by later drafting an affidavit that misleadingly continued to refer to the letter as “anonymous,” Duggan violated Connecticut General Statutes § 1-80(h)(2). This section specifically requires Ethics Commission members and staff to respect and comply with the law and conduct themselves at all times in a manner which promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the agency.

Additionally, by sending the letter and concealing its true author, Duggan made statements and material omissions outside of a Commission proceeding, which would likely prejudice that proceeding – in this case, regarding what action the Commission was to take with respect to the Executive Director. This was in violation of Connecticut General Statutes § 1-80(h)(7), which expressly prohibits such activity.

In the settlement, Duggan noted her intent to draw the Commissioners’ attention to agency procedures and conduct that she believed were improper, and her fear of retaliation for doing so in an open manner. Duggan stated that she disclosed her authorship of the letter to the Office of Labor Relations in March 2005.

“There is no greater duty of employees of an agency charged with enforcing honest and open government than to conduct themselves honestly and openly at all times,” said OSE Executive Director, Carol Carson.

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