

# TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF  
CYDNEY C. WALKER,  
RESPONDENT

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BEFORE THE  
TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION  
SC-32504110

## FINAL ORDER

### I. Recitals

The Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) held a preliminary review hearing on June 12, 2025, to consider sworn complaint SC-32504110. A quorum of the TEC was present. The respondent received legally sufficient notice of the hearing but did not appear at the hearing. The TEC proceeded with the hearing in the respondent's absence and found credible evidence of violations of Section 255.006(c) of the Election Code and Section 571.1242 of the Government Code. The TEC voted to issue this final order.

### II. Allegations

The sworn complaint alleged that, the respondent posted political advertising signs representing that she held, or knowingly represented in a campaign communication that she held a public office that she did not hold, by failing to include the word "for" on her campaign signs, in violation of Tex. Elec. Code § 255.006(c). TEC staff also alleged that the respondent failed to respond to the sworn complaint in violation of Tex. Gov't. Code § 571.1242(c).

### III. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

Credible evidence available to the TEC supports the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. The respondent was an unsuccessful non-incumbent candidate for Dallas city council, District 7, in the May 3, 2025 election.
2. In connection with her campaign, the respondent distributed campaign yard signs reading: "Choose Smart District 7 / Cydney Walker / Dallas City Council District 7."
3. There is credible evidence that the respondent failed to include the word "for" on her campaign signs. Therefore, there is credible evidence that the respondent violated Section 255.006(c) of the Election Code.
4. TEC enforcement staff sent the respondent notice of the complaint on April 10, 2025, by certified mail and delivery confirmation to the mailing address verified by the respondent.

The respondent received notice of the complaint on April 14, 2025, by delivery confirmation. Notice of the preliminary review hearing was sent on May 27, 2025 and was delivered via postal delivery confirmation on May 31, 2025. *See* 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 12.71.

5. The respondent had 10 business days to respond to the complaint, which was April 28, 2025, but failed to do so. The respondent has not replied to any written communications, nor did the respondent attend the preliminary review hearing held on June 12, 2025.
6. TEC enforcement staff attempted to contact the respondent multiple times by telephone, text message, and email. However, the respondent has offered no excuse for her failure to provide a written response to the complaint. There is therefore credible evidence that the respondent failed to timely respond to notice of the sworn complaint, in violation of Section 571.1242 of the Government Code.

#### **IV. Default Judgment**

1. The preliminary review hearing was held on June 12, 2025, at the State Capitol Extension, Room E1.014, in Austin, Texas. The respondent failed to appear at the hearing.
2. If a respondent fails to file an initial response to a complaint, upon notice and hearing, the TEC may proceed on a default basis. 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 12.93. The TEC may proceed in default if: 1) the notice of hearing stated that the allegations could be deemed admitted and that default could be granted against the party that fails to appear at the hearing; 2) the notice satisfied the requirements set by the Texas Administrative Procedure Act; and 3) the notice of preliminary hearing was received by the defaulting party, or was sent by regular or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the party's last known address per the TEC's records. *Id.* § 12.93(b).
3. The sworn complaint listed a residential address in Dallas, Texas, as the respondent's address. The respondent signed for delivery of the notice of hearing at this address on April 14, 2025.
4. Enforcement staff sent a second notice of the preliminary review hearing to the respondent on May 27, 2025. The respondent signed for delivery of the second notice of hearing at this address on May 31, 2025.
5. Enforcement staff sent the notice of preliminary review hearing by both certified mail and first class mail with delivery confirmation tracking to the respondent's last known address, at which the respondent had signed for notice of the sworn complaint several weeks before.
6. Enforcement staff sent notice of the hearing that complied with the requirements. Credible evidence indicates that the respondent received this notice. The TEC finds that the respondent received legally sufficient notice of the preliminary review hearing. *See* 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 12.93. At the preliminary review hearing on June 12, 2025, finding notice sufficient, the TEC proceeded in default and found the violations alleged.

7. The respondent may ask that this default order be set aside and the matter reinstated by filing a motion to set aside the Final Order within fifteen days of the date of this Final Order.
8. This order will become final 15 days after it is signed if no motion to set aside the default order is filed. If a motion to set aside the default order is filed and not granted, the order will be final on the date the motion is denied.

### **V. Confidentiality**

This Final Order is not confidential under Sections 571.126 and 571.140 of the Government Code and may be disclosed by members and staff of the TEC.

### **VI. Sanction**

The statutory penalty factors require that a civil penalty be imposed.

The TEC may impose a civil penalty of not more than \$5,000 or triple the amount at issue, whichever amount is more. Tex. Gov't Code § 571.173. The TEC shall consider the following factors in assessing a sanction: 1) the seriousness of the violation, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the violation; 2) the history and extent of previous violations; 3) the demonstrated good faith of the violator, including actions taken to rectify the consequences of the violation; 4) the penalty necessary to deter future violations; and 5) any other matters that justice may require. Tex. Gov't Code § 571.177.

#### *The Amount at Issue*

The respondent spent at least \$500 on her campaign advertising. Therefore, even without direct evidence of the costs of political advertising, the amount at issue is at least \$500.

#### *Factor 1: The Seriousness of the Violation*

The respondent did not respond to the sworn complaint or communicate with TEC staff, despite numerous attempts to contact her. A \$500 civil penalty is appropriate for the respondent's willful disengagement with the state's hearing process. An additional \$500 civil penalty is appropriate for the respondent's sign violations and her subsequent failure to correct them.

#### *Factor 2: The History and Extent of Previous Violations*

The respondent has no previous violations.

#### *Factor 3: The Demonstrated Good Faith of the Violator*

To the TEC's knowledge, the respondent never corrected her signs, nor, as discussed above, did she respond to the complaint. This does not indicate good faith on her part, but instead indifference to her obligations under the election law.

*Factor 4: The Penalty Necessary to Deter Future Violations*

To adequately deter both sign violations and failure to respond to sworn complaints, the TEC must impose a \$500 penalty for each violation type.

*Factor 5: Any Other Matters that Justice May Require*

None.

*Conclusion*

Therefore, the TEC orders that the respondent pay to the TEC, within 30 days of the date of this Order, a civil penalty in the amount of \$1,000. If the respondent does not pay the \$1,000 civil penalty within 30 days of the date of this Order, then the TEC orders that an additional \$2,500 civil penalty be imposed pursuant to Section 571.173 of the Government Code for delay in complying with this Order, and that the civil penalty and the additional \$2,500 penalty be referred to the Office of the Attorney General of Texas for collection.

FOR THE TEC

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James Tinley  
Executive Director  
Texas Ethics Commission