

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

IN RE:

LARRY THOMAS
Member, Tyler County Board of Education.

VCRB 2025-63

PROBABLE CAUSE ORDER

The Probable Cause Review Board, having investigated and considered the allegations set forth in VCRB 2025-63, unanimously finds that there is probable cause to believe that the Respondent, Larry Thomas, ("Thomas" or "Respondent"), violated the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Act, in his public position as a Member, Tyler County Board of Education, as follows:

Count One On or about January 5, 2021, the Respondent violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) and W. Va. Code R. § 158-6-3 by sending a text to the superintendent of Tyler County Schools soliciting his assistance in securing the employment of Thomas' son by Tyler County Schools.

In accordance with W. Va. Code § 6B-2-4(g), the Commission staff is hereby **Ordered** to prepare a Statement of Charges and to schedule this matter for a public hearing to determine the truth or falsity of the charges set forth in Count One.

ENTERED: September 17, 2025



Michael A. Kawash, Chairperson
Probable Cause Review Board



Daniel J. Guida, Member
Probable Cause Review Board

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

In Re:

COMPLAINT NO. VCRB 2025-63

Larry Thomas,
Member, Tyler County Board of Education,
Respondent

STATEMENT OF CHARGES

The Probable Cause Review Board of the West Virginia Ethics Commission entered an Order on September 17, 2025, finding that there is probable cause to believe that Tyler County Board of Education member, Larry Thomas, the Respondent in the above-referenced Complaint, violated the following provision in the Ethics Act by sending a text to the superintendent of Tyler County Schools soliciting his assistance in securing the employment of Thomas' son with Tyler County Schools.

W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b)(4) provides:

A public official or public employee may not show favoritism or grant patronage in the employment or working conditions of his or her relative or a person with whom he or she resides: Provided, That as used in this subdivision, "employment or working conditions" shall only apply to government employment: Provided, however, That government employment includes only those governmental entities specified in subsection (a) of this section.

W. Va. Code R. § 158-6-3 (2022) provides in part:

3.1. As used in this section, the term "nepotism" means favoritism shown or patronage granted in employment or working conditions by a public official or public employee to a relative or person with whom the public official or public employee resides.

3.2. As used in this section, the term "relative" means spouse, mother, father, sister, brother, son, daughter, grandmother, grandfather, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law.

3.4. Nepotism constitutes improper use of office for private gain.

3.5. A public official or employee may not influence or attempt to influence the employment or working conditions of his or her relative or a person with whom he or she resides...

The Order directed that this Statement of Charges be prepared and that the matter be scheduled for a public hearing to determine the truth or falsity of the charges.

Jurisdiction

1. Larry Thomas, ("Respondent" or "Thomas") was or is a member of the Tyler County Board of Education, at all times pertinent herein.

2. Thomas was a "public official" as defined in the Ethics Act, at W. Va. Code § 6B-1-3(k).

3. The Ethics Commission has jurisdiction over alleged violations of the West Virginia Ethics Act committed by public employees or officials, such as Thomas. W. Va. Code §§ 6B-1-1 through 6B-3-11.

Facts

4. On or about January 5, 2021, the Respondent sent a text to the superintendent of Tyler County Schools informing him of the Board of Education's discussion of proposals for the superintendent's salary during an executive session of the Board the day before, and then in the same text solicited his assistance in securing the employment of Thomas' son by Tyler County Schools, to wit:

Thanks again my friend. Just give you a little info we had two bd members was wanting \$2000 raise a year for a 4 year contract starting with your contact now meaning #122,000, \$124,00 \$126,000 ,\$128,00 for the last

year 😊. Do me a favor and get my son back home .Keep this to yourself Mrs. Hoover, Mrs. Byers and myself was in favor of the \$125,000 I was surprised with Dave. Thanks again.

Count One

5 The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 4 are re-alleged and incorporated herein by reference.

6. On or about January 5, 2021, Thomas violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b) and W. Va. Code R. § 158-6-3 by sending a text to the superintendent of Tyler County Schools soliciting his assistance in securing the employment of Thomas' son by Tyler County Schools.

Dated: September 19, 2025



Kimberly B. Weber
Executive Director

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

IN RE:

LARRY THOMAS
Member, Tyler County Board of Education

VCRB 2025-63

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the public hearing in the above-captioned matter will be held on December 10, 2025, at the offices of the West Virginia Ethics Commission, 210 Brooks Street, Third Floor Conference Room, Charleston, West Virginia, beginning at 10:00 a.m., before independent hearing examiner, Jeffrey G. Blaydes, Esq., to determine the truth or falsity of the charges set forth in the Statement of Charges issued on September 19, 2025. The hearing will be continued until completed.

Dated: September 19, 2025



Kimberly B. Weber
Executive Director

BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

In Re:

COMPLAINT NO. VCRB 2025-63

**Larry Thomas,
Member, Tyler County Board of Education,
Respondent**

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Kimberly B. Weber, Executive Director of the West Virginia Ethics Commission, hereby certify that I mailed a true and complete copy of the foregoing **PROBABLE CAUSE ORDER, STATEMENT OF CHARGES, and NOTICE OF HEARING** on September 19, 2025, to:

Via Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested:

Larry Thomas
79 Spruce Street
Middlebourne, WV 26149
Respondent

Via Email and Hand Delivery:

John N. Ellem, Esquire
Deputy General Counsel
West Virginia Ethics Commission
210 Brooks Street, Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25301
john.n.ellem@wv.gov
Counsel for Complainant



Kimberly B. Weber, Executive Director
West Virginia Ethics Commission
210 Brooks Street, Suite 300
Charleston, WV 25301
kimberly.b.weber@wv.gov
(304) 558-0664
(304) 558-2169 (fax)