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BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

IN RE:

VCRB 2025-63

Larry Thomas,
Member, Tyler County Board of Education

Conciliation Agreement

The West Virginia Ethics Commission and Larry Thomas freely and voluntarily enter into the following Conciliation Agreement pursuant to W. Va. Code § 6B-2-4(t) to resolve all the potential charges arising from allegations of violations of the West Virginia Ethics Act, based upon the facts set forth below.

Findings of Fact

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

2. At all times pertinent herein, Thomas was either a "public employee" or "public official" as defined in the Ethics Act, at W. Va. Code § 6B-1-3(j) and (k).

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

4. On or about January 4, 2021, Thomas attended a Tyler County Board of Education ("BOE") regular public meeting during which the BOE went into executive session to discuss the compensation package of the BOE superintendent.

5. On January 5, 2021, Thomas sent the superintendent a text message informing him of the BOE's discussion of proposals for the superintendent's salary that

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was had during the executive session and in the same text solicited the superintendent 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.

6. Thomas' son was employed in the school system of an adjacent county at the time this text was sent.

7. Thomas maintains that he mentioned his son in the text out of love for his son and his accompanying desire to have his son back home in Tyler County. Thomas states that he in no way intended the text as a demand or coercion to get the superintendent to find his son a job in Tyler County.

Relevant Legal Provisions

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,

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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…

Conciliation of Violations

I, Larry Thomas, admit that I violated W. Va. Code § 6B-2-5(b)(4) 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 my son by Tyler County Schools. I assert that I did not intend to violate the Ethics Act and that the text was in no way intended as a demand or coercion to get the superintendent to find my son a job in Tyler County but understand despite my intentions, there is evidence to support a violation. In order to resolve this matter, I am entering into this Conciliation Agreement. I understand that for this Agreement to be finalized, the Ethics Commission must approve it.

In consideration of the settlement of this matter, I agree to the Commission's imposition of the following sanctions:

1. A public reprimand;

2. A fine in the amount of $750.00 (Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars and 00/100) to be paid to the West Virginia Ethics Commission within 30 days of the entrance of the Order approving the Conciliation Agreement, and

3. To undergo training on the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Act, either in person, virtually, or by viewing the training provided on the Ethics Commission's website, at West Virginia Ethics Commission, within 30 days of the entrance of the Order approving the Conciliation Agreement. I shall provide written confirmation of the completion of this training to the Ethics Commission within five business days of completing it.

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I understand and agree that if the Ethics Commission fails to approve this Conciliation Agreement, then this Conciliation Agreement is null and void and the Complaint against me will proceed before the Hearing Examiner, where it will be processed in accordance with the West Virginia Code and the Ethics Commission's Legislative Rules.

If the Ethics Commission approves the Agreement, it will enter an Order in which it approves the Agreement and sets forth the sanctions listed above.

Both parties understand that, pursuant to W. Va. Code § 6B-2-4(t), this Conciliation Agreement and Commission Order must be made available to the public.

I hereby certify that I have read, understood, and agree to be bound by this agreement:

Oct 6 2025 — Date

Larry Thomas — Larry Thomas, Respondent

Approved by the West Virginia Ethics Commission:

11/6/25 — Date

Robert J. Wolfe, Chairperson
West Virginia Ethics Commission

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BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA ETHICS COMMISSION

IN RE: **COMPLAINT NO. VCRB 2025-63**

Larry Thomas,

Member, Tyler County Board of Education

COMMISSION'S ORDER

After considering the Findings of Fact, Relevant Legal Provisions, and Conciliation of Violations in the Conciliation Agreement, the West Virginia Ethics Commission finds that the Conciliation Agreement is in the best interests of the State and Larry Thomas, as required by W. Va. Code § 6B-2-4(t). In accordance with W. Va. Code § 6B-2-4(s), the Commission imposes the following sanctions:

1. A public reprimand;

2. A fine in the amount of $750.00 (Seven Hundred and Fifty Dollars and 00/100) to be paid to the West Virginia Ethics Commission within 30 days of the entrance of the Order approving the Conciliation Agreement, and

3. To undergo training on the West Virginia Governmental Ethics Act, either in person, virtually, or by viewing the training provided on the Ethics Commission's website, at West Virginia Ethics Commission, within 30 days of the entrance of the Order approving the Conciliation Agreement. I shall provide written confirmation of the completion of this training to the Ethics Commission within five business days of completing it

Date: November 6, 2025

Robert J. Wolfe, Chairperson
West Virginia Ethics Commission