

Whistleblower Referral

Referral ID: [REDACTED] Case Number: N/A Date Submitted: 01/06/2021

WB Info

Rejected:

Date Rejected: 01/08/2021

Reason Rejected: There is another avenue available for addressing the matter

Initial Assertion:

Assigned Team: (select team)

Closed Date: 01/08/2021

Date Assigned:

Records Destroyed:

Report Issued:

Report Date:

Audit Number:

Related Case Number:

WB Dates

| | 15 days | 60 days | 120 days | 365 days |
|----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Deadline: | 01/27/2021 | 03/31/2021 | 06/23/2021 | 01/06/2022 |
| Mailed On: | 01/08/2021 | | | |
| Agency Notified On: | | | | |
| Subject Notified On: | | | | |

Subject Info

| Subject Name | Entity |
|-----------------|---|
| Tabitha Pomeroy | Department of Children, Youth, and Families |

Contact Info

Contact Preference: Day Phone Night Phone Email Regular Mail

Agency: NULL

Division:

Current Position:

| Contact ID | FirstName | LastName | Email |
|------------|-----------|----------|-------|
| [REDACTED] | | | |

Details

What type of improper governmental action are you reporting?

- Conflict of Interest/Nepotism
- Contract Issues
- Gross mismanagement
- Gross waste of public funds
- Other improper governmental action per state law (Chapter 42.40 RCW)
- Personal Use of State Resources
- Preventing dissemination of scientific opinion or altering technical findings
- Special Privilege
- Substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety
- Time and Attendance
- Travel
- Violation of state law or regulation

Which RCW(s) or WAC(s) have been violated?

When and where did the improper governmental action take place?

Please describe the improper governmental action in detail. The more detailed information you provide us, the better we will be able to assess your concerns. Improper governmental action cannot be related to personnel matters.

At an all staff meeting for the MLK office on 12/16/2020, an employee asked a question about whether rumors they had heard were true regarding foster kids having to sleep in cars with state employees or on the floors in state offices with no beds, blankets, pillows. Tabitha Pomeroy, the AA of the office, stated that "yes that is absolutely happening and it is coming from me." She went on to explain that the foster youth were "violent" and were "getting the office kicked out of hotels", so when a group home placement or a night to night placement was found and a foster youth did not want to go, she was directing staff to not request a hotel and to make the youth sleep in the car or the office until they accept the placement. She stated she was "not going to reward their tantrums by letting them stay in a hotel or on a comfortable couch (in the office)." She spoke several times about how the foster youth were "violent" and "destroyed property" often. Several employees asked questions and voiced their concern with this practice in the zoom chat or out loud in the zoom meeting. An employee mentioned that this was not a trauma informed approach to housing and taking care of foster youth. Another employee stated that it was not appropriate to remove children from their homes for abuse or neglect and then force them to sleep on floors or in cars. An employee asked that if the state would not pay for hotels, could we have beds and blankets and make a room in the office for youth to sleep comfortably. This was ignored. Ms. Pomeroy did respond by suggesting that an employee who had asked a question about the ethics of having youth sleep in cars or on floors "work a 24 hour shift to keep this from happening". The meeting ended before more could be said or discussed. Ms Pomeroy is using her power as the AA to make executive decisions as to youth and those decisions are not in the youth's best interest. DCYF is meant to protect youth and advocate for their safety, permanency, and well-being. Ms. Pomeroy is abusing her power and going against DCYF's mission, policy, and codes as well as the NASW's code of ethics by refusing them a place to sleep comfortably when the means exist. In addition, this practice is especially harmful to workers and youth during COVID.

Can we find, or can you provide, additional information to support your assertions?

Yes No

Are there other witnesses?

Yes No

If yes, please provide their contact information.

Again, any employee at the MLK office of DCYF who was present during this all staff.

How do you know about the information you are disclosing here?

Have you already submitted this assertion?

Yes No

Outcome

- All Assertions Not Substantiated
- Closed in Preliminary
- Ethical Violation
- Workpapers Sent to Executive Ethics Board
- Ethics Board Enforcement - Dollar Amount:
- External Law Enforcement - Entity:
- No Action Was Taken
- Other

Investigators

| |
|-------------------|
| Investigator Name |
|-------------------|

Investigator Comments:

Activity Log

| Entry Date | Log Entry |
|------------|--|
| 1/8/2021 | Referral updated by gillisj |
| 1/8/2021 | Attachment added by gillisj |
| 1/8/2021 | On 1/7/21 committee reviewed and determined to close with an fyi to the agency, the submission was anonymous therefore no letter will be sent to the wb. |
| 1/6/2021 | Referral submitted from external site |

Documents

| |
|------------------------|
| Attachment |
| DCYF_180172_FYILtr.pdf |

Subject's Name: Tabitha Pomeroy

Agency: Department of Children, Youth, and Families

Division: **Position:** Area Administrator

Location: Seattle **Phone:** [REDACTED]

Subject's Supervisor(s): Erik Applebee

Supervisor's Position(s): Regional Administrator

Supervisor's Phone(s):

- Outcome:**
- Resigned
 - Terminated
 - Disciplined
 - Demoted
 - Required to Take Training



**Office of the Washington State Auditor
Pat McCarthy**

January 8, 2021

Ross Hunter, Secretary
Department of Children, Youth and Families
[REDACTED]

Dear Secretary Hunter:

We recently received a whistleblower complaint asserting improper governmental activity at the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

We have completed our initial analysis of the concern and determined your agency may effectively address the issue. Therefore, we will not open an official whistleblower investigation (RCW 42.40.040(1)(b)).

Briefly, the complaint stated:

At an all staff meeting for the MLK office on 12/16/20, an employee asked a question about whether rumors they had heard were true regarding foster kids having to sleep in cards with state employees or on the floors in state offices with no beds, blanket, pillows. Tabitha Pomeroy, the AA of the office stated “yes that is absolutely happening and it is coming from me.” She went on to explain that the foster youth were “violent” and were “getting the office kicked out of hotels”, so when a group home placement or a night to night placement was found and a foster youth did not want to go, she was directing staff to not request a hotel and to make the youth sleep in a car or the office floor until they accept the placement.

If you have questions or need further information, please contact me at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

TROY NIEMEYER
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF STATE AUDIT

TN:jmg

cc: Liana Dupont-Smith, Internal Audit Manager
Ref: 180172