



Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee

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DATE: MAY 3, 2013
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PUBLIC STATEMENT

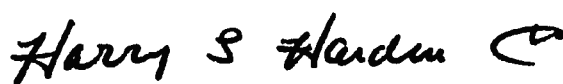
Every candidate for judicial office in Louisiana must campaign in accordance with the precepts contained in Canon 7 of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee is authorized by the Louisiana Supreme Court to review and investigate complaints which allege violations of certain provisions of Canon 7. Although Committee deliberations are and remain confidential, once a public statement has been issued or a complaint has been dismissed, the complaint and response are matters of public record and may be requested through the Court's Community Relations division.

The Committee has received two complaints alleging that Hilary Landry, a candidate for Division D of the 24th Judicial District Court, violated various provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Both complaints were filed by her opponent, Scott Schlegel. Although the Committee finds the majority of Schlegel's allegations have merit, this public statement focuses on what the Committee finds to be the two most egregious violations of Canon 7.

The first concerns a Landry campaign mailer regarding Schlegel's handling of a case involving the alleged violation of a protective order in a domestic violence matter. Based on the evidence presented by Schlegel and Landry, the Committee determined that Landry placed an image of Schlegel's signature taken from one bill of information, which Schlegel had dismissed, and placed it under a description of various violent offenses, not the subject of the dismissed case, thereby falsely suggesting Schlegel had dismissed those charges. The charges Schlegel actually dismissed concerned the same defendant but did not involve acts of violence. Landry

also quoted portions of an email from the alleged victim to Schlegel in a way the Committee found misleading. The Committee believes that the distribution of this campaign mailer by Landry constitutes a false statement and therefore violates Canon 7A(9), which provides that a judge or judicial candidate shall not “knowingly make, or cause to be made, a false statement concerning the identity, qualifications, present position, or other fact concerning the candidate or an opponent.”

The second concerns a Landry campaign mailer regarding a case of alleged child molestation, which is currently pending in the 24th Judicial District Court. Schlegel was a prosecutor in two previous attempts to try the case that resulted in hung juries. The mailer implies that the defendant is politically connected, and contains statements such as, “Don’t let another criminal go Scott Free” and “And now we’ve learned that Scott Schlegel could not convict a man who was inappropriate with a child even after the man confessed ‘he did it.’” Although the defendant is not named, the mailer, which may well have been distributed to potential jurors in the case, references the case number and includes images of newspaper clippings. The Committee believes that such statements implicating the constitutional presumption of innocence, presented to potential jurors by a judicial candidate, especially one running for the same court where the case is pending, “would reasonably be expected to affect the outcome or impair the fairness of a matter pending in any Louisiana state court” as prohibited by Canon 7A(10) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Therefore, the Committee finds that the distribution of this campaign mailer by Hilary Landry violates Canon 7A(10).



Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee
Harry S. Hardin, III, Chair