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PRESS RELEASE

Campaign and COVID Relief Cases Heard by Ethics Commission

RENO, NEVADA (March 16, 2023) – The Ethics Commission held an adjudicatory hearing on March 15 regarding State Fire Marshall employee and Washoe County School District Trustee Joseph Rodriguez. The hearing involved ethics complaint allegations that Rodriguez improperly used photos of himself in his public employee uniform to bolster his 2022 campaign for School Board Trustee. The Commission heard evidence and arguments and determined that Rodriguez’s use of photos of himself in his uniform on his campaign website constituted four violations of the Nevada Ethics Law. In addition to a requirement that he attend Ethics Training, Rodriguez was fined a civil penalty in the amount of \$1,000.

In addition to the Rodriguez case, the Commission heard arguments on motions related to Consolidated Ethics Case Nos. 20-081C and 20-085C regarding former Nye County Commissioner Leonardo Blundo and actions he took to secure grant funding for his business during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission granted a motion for summary judgment finding that Blundo had violated the Nevada Ethics Law’s disclosure and abstention requirements by not sufficiently disclosing his interests in the County’s COVID grant funding program. Motions for summary judgment on other ethics violations were not granted and those allegations will proceed to an adjudicatory hearing scheduled for April 19, 2023.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled on April 19 and will be held in Las Vegas. Zoom videoconference connectivity will also be available.

Meeting Materials: <https://ethics.nv.gov/Meetings/2023/2023/>

Panel Determinations: <https://ethics.nv.gov/Opinions/>

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