



February 9, 2024

Basilio D. Villarreal, Jr.  
President, Board of Trustees  
Rio Grande City Grulla ISD  
1 Fort Ringgold  
Rio Grande City, TX 78582

Re: Concerns Over Employee Political Actions While on District Time

Dear Mr. Villarreal:

I write to bring to your attention a concerning matter that has and may still be occurring with one of Rio Grande City Grulla ISD's employees, Jessica Vera-Rios.

I was in the courtroom in Starr County on August 29, 2022, for a hearing to determine the residency of a candidate for Starr County Judge. As you may be aware, Ms. Vera-Rios' father is the incumbent Starr County Judge. Judge Vera had filed the complaint that had brought us to that courtroom on August 29<sup>th</sup>.

While in the courtroom, Judge Vera's daughter, Ms. Vera-Rios was present in the courtroom for the hearing and even approached me and spoke to me. This hearing occurred during business hours. Ms. Vera-Rios was not a party to the proceeding in the court that day.

At that time, I became concerned that she was abusing taxpayer dollars by neglecting her duties to the District to attend a court hearing regarding her father's campaign opponent's residency. Because of my concern, I commissioned public information requests regarding Ms. Vera-Rios' employment status and requests for time off, which went unanswered and ultimately were met with hollow objections by the District's lawyer.

In an attempt to find the truth of this matter, those public information requests were refiled in the summer of 2023. Those requests, despite multiple submissions from both the requestor and the Texas Attorney General's office, were not fulfilled until the requestor was forced to file a mandamus action against the District. The mandamus action was ultimately

dismissed, but not until the District had to pay out over \$2,500 taxpayer dollars in costs and attorney's fees.

Upon finally receiving the requested documents, it became apparent Ms. Vera-Rios was in fact on District time while she was in court that day. Her personnel records show no request for time off to attend that hearing and give no other indication that she was not being paid by the District during that hearing.

It is concerning that she was allowed to abuse Rio Grande City ISD taxpayers in such a blatant manner. Public money should never be used for personal or political gain.

I call on the Rio Grande City Grulla ISD Board of Trustees to open a full, transparent investigation into not only this specific instance, but of all instances in which employees have conducted political affairs while on District time.

I look forward to the findings of your investigation. I know that making sure that your taxpayers' dollars are being appropriately managed is your priority.

Sincerely,

*Wayne Hamilton*

Wayne Hamilton  
Director,  
ProjectRedTX

Cc: Jay Pena  
Vice President,  
Board of Trustees

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