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Starr County Judge Eloy Vera Faces Ethics Probe

Multiple alleged offenses could bring hefty fines, jail time

AUSTIN, TX – Starr County Judge Eloy Vera is currently under investigation by the Texas Ethics Commission for a slew of campaign violations that carry criminal penalties.

State law requires candidates to file regular campaign finance reports detailing political contributions and expenditures and prohibits candidates for county judge from making political expenditures without a campaign treasurer on file. Vera has regularly failed to comply with these transparency laws since taking office in 1998, including five violations over the past two years which are now the subject of an ethics probe.

“Citizens deserve elected leaders who follow the law,” said Wayne Hamilton of local governance group #ProjectRedTX. “This is not an issue that is going to go away for Judge Vera. He has to answer to the State of Texas.”

“Keeping the public in the dark about who campaign donors are and how donated money is spent carries with it potential criminal penalties,” added Raymond Davenport, former Chairman of the Texas Ethics Commission. “The election code is crystal clear about this. These are serious allegations.”

The Texas Ethics Commission accepted a sworn complaint alleging Vera has disregarded the state’s campaign finance reporting requirements, denying the public information as to who supported his campaign and who he paid using campaign funds. The complaint indicates neither the Starr County Clerk nor the Starr County Elections Administrator have record of a campaign treasurer appointment or any campaign finance reports relating to Vera’s electoral activity over the years. At least two separate Public Information Requests sought these copies and found that no such information is on file.

Vera has held this office for nearly 25 years, facing Democratic primary challengers in 2014 and 2018 and a general election challenger in 2022. He consistently failed to file campaign finance disclosures during these reelection campaigns. Raising and spending political funds without a designated treasurer is a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by up to one year in jail per offense.

In accordance with state law, the Texas Ethics Commission will investigate the allegations and conduct an ethics hearing on the case. For more information or to follow the progress of the complaint, visit projectredtx.com.

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