



Missouri Ethics Commission

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Final Action: MEC No. 20-0095-I, Dr. Natalie DeWeese

Date: January 7, 2021

The Missouri Ethics Commission took final consideration of the complaint filed against Dr. Natalie DeWeese at its January 6, 2021 meeting. Dr. DeWeese is Vice President of the Wentzville Board of Education.

Dr. DeWeese's husband is a teacher in the Wentzville school district. The complaint that was filed with the Commission alleged that Dr. DeWeese had improperly voted upon school district matters involving teacher pay, contracts, and benefits.

The relevant portions of Section 105.452.1, RSMo state that "No elected or appointed official or employee of the state or any political subdivision thereof shall:

(2) Use confidential information obtained in the course of or by reason of his employment or official capacity in any manner with intent to result in financial gain for himself, his spouse, his dependent child in his custody, or any business with which he is associated;

(3) Disclose confidential information obtained in the course of or by reason of his employment or official capacity in any manner with intent to result in financial gain for himself or any other person;

(4) Favorably act on any matter that is so specifically designed so as to provide a special monetary benefit to such official or his spouse or dependent children, including but not limited to increases in retirement benefits, whether received from the state of Missouri or any third party by reason of such act. For the purposes of this subdivision, "special monetary benefit" means being materially affected in a substantially different manner or degree than the manner or degree in which the public in general will be affected or, if the matter affects only a special calls of persons, then affected in a substantially different manner or degree than the manner or degree in which such class will be affected. In all such matters such officials must recuse themselves from acting, except that such official may act on increases in compensation subject to the restrictions of Section 13 of Article VII of the Missouri Constitution[.]

The MEC investigation found that the school district negotiates its teacher contracts with the local teacher's union, so any votes related to that bargaining process would not result in a special monetary benefit to Dr. DeWeese's spouse. The investigation also confirmed that Dr. DeWeese recuses herself from participating in any matters having a direct benefit to her spouse.

The Commission has previously addressed this very situation. In MEC Advisory Opinion 2004.01.101, the Commission determined that an ambulance board member, whose spouse was employed by the fire district, need not recuse from union contracts negotiations provided the spouse received no special benefit. Similarly, in MEC Advisory Opinion 1997.11.122, the Commission opined that the wife of a firefighter's union president, who was also a district director, could not get involved in the negotiation between the district and the firefighter's union; however, could vote if the contract include no special monetary benefit to her husband.

From the facts presented, the Commission found no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of Chapter 105, RSMo, and dismissed the complaint.

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
Executive Director