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Higher Education Coordinating Commission
PRIVATE CAREER SCHOOLS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
December 12th, 2019

Good morning HECC Staff and Commissioners,

My name is **Holly Camacho** and I am here in the capacity a private citizen who worked for a licensed private-post secondary school here in the state of Oregon, until May 3rd, 2019 and my job title and duties were of School Administrator and Title IV Administrator.

I am here to day to request the committee consider recommending that: **OAR 715-045-0023 and/or ORS 345.120 be augmented to state that when HECC notifies a career school its is a subject of complaint from any source that retaliation against students or staff making or cooperating with any investigation in good faith be strictly prohibited. If it occurs and is proven a fine due the HECC is levied. If it occurs repeatedly, loss of licensure may occur.**

This request comes from my personal experience; after I reported fraud and non- compliance in good faith I was terminated, which is to be expected. What happened next was surreal, it is this set of events I am referencing here and looking to augment the rules. First a harassment-disinformation campaign by the school owner began by calling *potential* employers in two states, *cold calling* and asking if I had applied for a job and stating if I did I was a “dangerous hire”. Then came the written memos to numerous schools sent certified mail, labeled PUBLIC NOTICE filled with reasons not to hire me, fabricated reprimands from a fabricated employment file and allegations I falsified student hours and ledgers. This written campaign happened in July, 2019 and again in November 2019. These are the incidences I am aware of to date.

The HECC Compliance staff has correctly directed me to BOLI and others to a private attorney. The problem with this is I have an open BOLI case and it will take several more months maybe even more than a year before they can assist in stopping this, they are busy and there is a queue. I have talked to 3 very reputable attorneys, even the one who defended the Marinello School’s whistleblowers. I hear the same thing from each, they believe the BOLI and other investigations should play out and **then** I should file in federal court against the school owner, if the BOLI outcome is not acceptable. More alarming to me, they all tell me to *relax* each time he sends a cosmetology school a *slander package* as it will increase my end settlement as it is in writing and signed by the school owner. They call it perfect evidence for a large award. I did not do this for a settlement, I did this for the protection of Oregon students, protection of federal funds and to follow the law. A staff member who acts in good faith can be harassed for a year or more before these means provide resolution. Augmenting **OAR 715-045-0023 and/or ORS 345.120** may bring some relief to others going forward. It may allow current and past staff of schools to cooperate with the HECC complaints that are being investigated without hiding for fear of school owners retaliating.

Thank you for your time, I am glad to respond to any questions.

Holly Camacho



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