

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD

In the Matter of:

Benjamin Corral

Respondent.

No. 2012-10

STIPULATED FACTS,  
CONCLUSIONS AND ORDER

**I. STIPULATION**

THIS STIPULATION is entered into under WAC 292-100-090(1) between the Respondent, BENJAMIN CORRAL, and Board Staff of the WASHINGTON STATE EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD (Board) through MELANIE DeLEON, Executive Director. The following stipulated facts, conclusions, and agreed order will be binding upon the parties if fully executed, and if accepted by the Board without modification(s), and will not be binding if rejected by the Board, or if the Respondent does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, to the stipulation.

**Section 1: PROCEDURAL FACTS**

1.1. On January 30, 2012, the Executive Ethics Board (Board) received a complaint alleging that Benjamin Corral, Interviewer for the Employment Security Department may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act by using state resources for personal gain.

1.2. The Board is authorized under RCW 34.05.060 to establish procedures for attempting and executing informal settlement of matters in lieu of more formal proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, including adjudicative hearings. The Board has established such procedures under WAC 292-100-090.

1.3. Benjamin Corral understands that if Board staff proves any or all of the alleged violations at a hearing, the Board may impose sanctions, including a civil penalty under RCW 42.52.480(1)(b) of up to \$5,000, or the greater of three times the economic value of anything received or sought in violation of chapter 42.52 RCW, for each violation found. The Board may also order the payment of costs, including reasonable investigative costs, under RCW 42.52.480(1)(c).

1.4. Benjamin Corral recognizes that the evidence available to the Board staff is such that the Board may conclude he violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. Therefore, in the interest of seeking an informal and expeditious resolution of this matter, the parties agree to entry of the stipulated findings of fact, conclusions of law and agreed order set forth below.

1.5. Benjamin Corral waives the opportunity for a hearing, contingent upon acceptance of this stipulation by the Board, or his acceptance of any modification(s) proposed by the Board, pursuant to the provisions of WAC 292-100-090(2) which provides in part:

The board has the option of accepting, rejecting, or modifying the proposed stipulation or asking for additional facts to be presented. If the board accepts the stipulation or modifies the stipulation with the agreement of the respondent, the board shall enter an order in conformity with the terms of the stipulation. If the board rejects the stipulation or the respondent does not agree to the board's proposed modifications to the stipulation, the normal process will continue. The proposed stipulation and information obtained during formal settlement discussions shall not be admitted into evidence at a subsequent public hearing.

1.6. If the Board accepts this stipulation, the Board will release and discharge Benjamin Corral from all further ethics proceedings under chapter 42.52 RCW for matters arising out of the facts contained in the complaint in this matter, subject to payment of the full amount of the civil penalty due and owing, any other costs imposed, and compliance with all other terms and conditions of the agreed order. Benjamin Corral in turn agrees to release and discharge the Board, its officers, agents and employees from all claims, damages, and causes of action arising out of this complaint and this stipulation and agreed order.

1.7. If this Stipulation is accepted, this Stipulation and Order does not purport to settle any other claims between Benjamin Corral and the Washington State Executive Ethics Board, the State of Washington, or other third party, which may be filed in the future.

1.8. If this Stipulation is accepted, this Stipulation and Order is enforceable under RCW 34.05.578 and any other applicable statutes or rules.

1.9. If the Board rejects this stipulation, or if Benjamin Corral does not accept the Board's proposed modification(s), if any, this matter will be scheduled for an administrative hearing in front of the Board and Benjamin Corral waives any objection to participation by any Board member at any subsequent hearing to whom this stipulation was presented for approval under WAC 292-100-090(2). Further, Benjamin Corral understands and agrees that this proposed stipulation and information obtained during any formal settlement discussions held between the parties shall not be admitted into evidence at a subsequent public hearing, unless otherwise agreed by the parties.

## **Section 2: FINDINGS OF FACT**

2.1. Mr. Corral worked as a WorkSource Specialist for ESD for all times pertinent to this investigation

2.2. On July 28, 2011, ESD Human Resource Consultant Jeanette Sills received a report from ESD's Technology Division entitled the IronPort report that summarized Mr. Corral's use of the internet. As a result of that report, she concluded that a more in-depth report was needed from the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) concerning the computer use of Mr. Corral.

2.3. The IronPort reporting summary from the Technology Division provided evidence that Mr. Corral may have used the agency's internet for personal business. Information

from a 49 day period (September 14, 2011 to November 1, 2011), revealed that 46.6 percent of Mr. Corral's internet use was for personal benefit. Some examples are listed below:

- News – 28.8 %
- Streaming Media – 6.7 %
- Job Searching – 4.9 %
- Shopping – 1.2 %.

2.4. On November 3, 2011, a request was made to the OSI to retrieve data stored on Mr. Corral's work laptop computer, ID# IT02909. OSI retrieved data from Mr. Corral's computer on November 3, 2011. OSI discovered Mr. Corral laptop computer (IT02909) had been broken for about a week prior to the retrieval and that he was given a replacement laptop (IT 04075). OSI pulled the data from the replacement laptop on November 3, 2011.

2.5. On November 15, 2011, OSI mirrored the hard drive of laptop #IT02909 to analyze the data to determine if there was evidence of improper use. The following evidence was found:

Internet history — September 23, October 6, and October 26 (3 days)

Online viewing of the Wenatchee News  
Online banking — Wells Fargo  
Online shopping — Ebay, Eastbay, Big 5 Sporting Goods, PayPal, and vacuum  
Emails to the Wenatchee World  
Sports — [Foxsports.com](http://Foxsports.com), Larry Brown Sports.

2.6. There was evidence that internet files had been overwritten with “SPPing” or fruadetect”. One hundred thirty-four files were lost because of this activity.

2.7. There were five audio files found, detected and removed. These files were MP3 files and although recovered, could not be heard. These files were found in temporary Internet Files and were a result of internet web activity.

2.8. As a result of violations of agency policies and state ethics laws Mr. Corral was suspended for three months without pay.

### **Section 3: CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

3.1. Pursuant to chapter 42.52 RCW, the Executive Ethics Board has jurisdiction over Benjamin Corral and over the subject matter of this complaint.

3.2. Pursuant to WAC 292-100-090(1), the parties have the authority to resolve this matter under the terms contained herein, subject to Board approval.

3.3. The Ethics in Public Service Act, Chapter 42.52 RCW, prohibits state employees from using state resources for their benefit. RCW 42.52.160(1) states:

No state officer or state employee may employ or use any person, money, or property under the officer's or employee's official control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the officer, employee, or another.

3.4. Based on Findings of Fact 2.1 through 2.8, Benjamin Corral used state resources for personal gain.

3.5. The Board is authorized to impose sanctions for violations to the Ethics Act pursuant to RCW 42.52.360. The Board has set forth criteria in WAC 292-120-030 for imposing sanctions and consideration of any mitigating or aggravating factors.

### **Section 4: AGGRAVATING AND MITIGATING FACTORS**

In determining the appropriateness of the civil penalty, the Board reviewed the criteria in WAC 292-120-030. Aggravating factors are that, Benjamin Corral continued to commit the violation even after being directed to stop by his supervisors. There is evidence to show that Mr. Corral attempted to cover up his misuse by resetting the default setting to erase all site and cookie information each time he closed the internet application and access the internet. It is a

mitigating factor that as a result of these violations Mr. Corral was suspended by his agency for three month without pay.

**Section 5: AGREED ORDER**

5.1 For the violation RCW 42.52.160, Benjamin Corral will pay a civil penalty in the amount of, two thousand, five hundred dollars (\$2,500.00). The Board agrees to suspend (\$1,000) on the condition that Benjamin Corral complies with all terms and conditions of this Stipulation and Order and commits no further violations of RCW 42.52 for a period of two years from the date this agreement is executed.

5.2 The civil penalty of \$1,500 is payable in full, to the State Executive Ethics Board within 45 days after this stipulation is accepted by the Board, or as otherwise agreed to by the parties.

**II. CERTIFICATION**

I, Benjamin Corral, hereby certify that I have read this Stipulation and Agreed Order in its entirety; that my counsel of record, if any, has fully explained the legal significance and consequence of it; that I fully understand and agree to all of it; and that it may be presented to the Board without my appearance. I knowingly and voluntarily waive my right to a hearing in this matter; and if the Board accepts the Stipulation and Agreed Order, I understand that I will receive a signed copy.

B-C      10-30-12  
BENJAMIN CORRAL      Date  
Respondent

Stipulated to and presented by:

Melanie deLeon      11-6-12  
Melanie deLeon      Date  
Executive Director

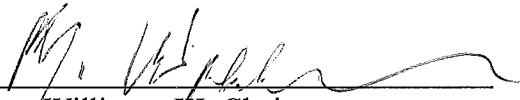
**II. ORDER**


Having reviewed the proposed Stipulation, WE, THE STATE OF WASHINGTON EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD, pursuant to WAC 292-100-090, HEREBY ORDER that the Stipulation is

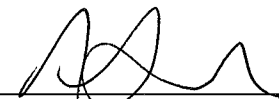
- ACCEPTED in its entirety;
- REJECTED in its entirety;
- MODIFIED. This Stipulation will become the Order of the Board if the Respondent approves\* the following modification(s):

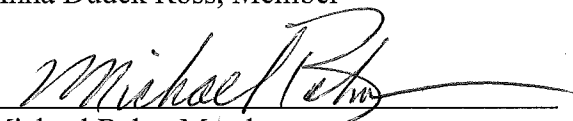
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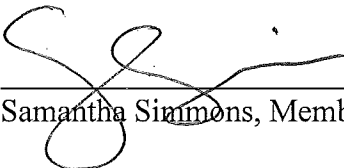
DATED this 9th day of November, 2012

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew Williams, III, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisa Marsh, Vice-Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Anna Dudek Ross, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael Bahn, Member

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Samantha Simmons, Member

\* I, \_\_\_\_\_, accept/do not accept (circle one) the proposed modification(s).

\_\_\_\_\_  
BENJAMIN CORRAL, Respondent                      Date