

1 **BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE**
2 **EXECUTIVE ETHICS BOARD**

3 In the Matter of:

4 Jesse Taylor,

5 Respondent
6 _____

EEB Case No. 2025-015

ORDER OF DEFAULT AND
FINAL ORDER

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8 **I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY**

9 On February 20, 2025, the Executive Ethics Board (Board) received a complaint alleging
10 that Jesse “Chip” Taylor¹, an employee of the Washington State Department of Labor and
11 Industries (LNI), may have violated the Ethics in Public Service Act. The complaint alleged that
12 Jesse Taylor violated RCW Chapter 42.52, by using state resources for non-work related
13 activities.

14 On April 3, 2025, the Board found reasonable cause to believe that violation(s) of RCW
15 42.52 had been committed and the penalty may be greater than \$500.

16 On April 8, 2025, notification of the Reasonable Cause Determination was deposited in the
17 United States mail, first-class and certified, to Jesse Taylor at their home address on record, 2226
18 East 68th Street Tacoma, WA 98404. The first-class mailing was not returned by the USPS.
19 According to USPS, the certified letter was signed for by “Gregory Taylor.”

20 Jesse Taylor has not responded to the Reasonable Cause Determination as of the date of this
21 Order.

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¹ According to LNI, “Chip” is Jesse Taylor’s nickname.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. According to the complaint, Jesse Taylor allegedly used their LNI email to send out an email to an LNI distribution list encouraging employees to spend “at least two hours” of the work week doing things that did not appear to be work related.

2. In addition to the complaint, Board staff were provided with a copy of the following email in question:

From: Taylor, Chip (LNI)
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 2:35 PM
To: LNI DL ADM CACT²
Subject: An assignment for each of you.

Team,
As we adapt to our new world of isolation, I have a work assignment for you. I want each of you to spend at least two hours of your work week doing something completely outside of your normal world of application development, something completely meant to aid your own mental good health. This could be seeking out and watching meditation videos, finding a relaxing streaming music station, doing some training unrelated to your job, figuring out how to do yoga from your desk, or anything else you can think of. I'd like to make this a topic of discussion at our Tuesday team meeting. Let us all know what you have found and how it affected you. I'll be doing the same. Remember that mental good health is just as important as physical good health, especially during this time of greatly increased stress.

Thank you,

Jesse "Chip" Taylor
Supervisor, Web & Claims Applications, Claims Applications Core Team
Information Technology
Department of Labor & Industries
360-902-5950 | taylor.jesse@lni.wa.gov

² Board staff obtained a list of recipients included in this distribution list; it included seven LNI IT employees.

1 3. In addition to the above LNI distribution list, Jesse Taylor also cc'd three separate
2 LNI employees, including their direct supervisor Dan Parsons, IT Application Developer
3 Manager.

4 4. According to LNI, Jesse Taylor was hired on April 1, 2010, as an Information
5 Technology Specialist (ITS4). On May 1, 2013, Jesse Taylor was promoted to an ITS5. On May
6 1, 2014, Jesse Taylor was promoted to an ITS5 Supervisor. On July 1, 2019, Jesse Taylor was
7 moved to an IT Application Development Journey position, as part of a statewide IT reallocation
8 and they still maintain that position.

9 5. As part of this investigation, Board staff obtained six months of Jesse Taylor's
10 LNI emails, starting on the day of the above email. Upon review of the provided emails, Board
11 staff located only the following email related to "wellness," in addition to the email from the
12 complaint:

13 **Sent April 14, 2020**
14 **From: Jesse Taylor**
15 **To: LNI DL ADM CACT**
16 **Subject: Online**

17 Just finished one of the EAP webinars on Self Care. I highly recommend this for each of
18 you. Just go to <http://eap.wa.gov> and click on Covid-19 Resources to sign up for the next
19 one.

20 6. Board staff contacted LNI to ascertain whether they had an agency policy related
21 to wellness. According to the Darcy Worms, LNI ethics advisor, LNI does not have a wellness
22 policy. However, they have supervisor guidelines that are noted on the LNI wellness site. In
23 summary, it states "[l]ead your employees by encouraging them to actively pursue a wellness-
24 related lifestyle." Additionally, the wellness website lists suitable examples of encouraged
25 wellness activities, such as: one time only 30 minutes for online registration to the LNI
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1 SmartHealth website, 30 minutes per year for completing the online well-being assessment, and
2 50 minutes per week for accessing the online agency wellness program and websites directly
3 linked to it. Lastly, the website states, “[e]ncourage employees to use paid work time and work
4 resources to assist with coordinating both agencywide and local office wellness initiatives.”
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6 7. Board staff contacted each LNI employee listed on the email in question, to
7 inquire if they took “wellness time” during the week as directed by the email. Two employees
8 stated they “do not recall this email.” Another employee stated they took the two hours “one
9 time” and used the time to stretch, as they were at home teleworking and not moving much.
10 After taking the initial time, they stated it “did not feel right,” and they did not take any additional
11 time. They further advised they received no follow-up email to stop using the wellness time, so
12 they are unsure what other employees did (if anything). Another employee replied that while
13 they didn’t specifically “recall” receiving the email in question, they “would have interpreted it
14 as encouragement to take mental health breaks and engage in physical exercise to alleviate the
15 mental strain associated with development work and the additional stress from all the COVID-
16 19 issues.”³
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18 8. Board staff contacted Dan Parsons to inquire if they had given Jesse Taylor
19 permission to send the email in question, or if they were even aware of the email prior to being
20 cc’d. According to Dan Parsons, they did not recall the email in question but stated “[i]t wouldn’t
21 not surprise me that an email like that would go out to staff since the wellness 360 program here
22 at LNI comes up with ways to help us make sure we are taking breaks and doing health activities
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³ Board staff did not receive a response from any additional parties emailed.

1 throughout the day.” Dan Parsons further stated, “[t]he email seems to fall in line with activities
2 that the health and wellness group would put forward for our employee benefits.”

3 9. In Jesse Taylor’s written response to Board staff, they stated, “[t]he email was
4 prompted by our Wellness group at L&I that was concerned about the employees who had just
5 been required to isolate at home due to the COVID pandemic and was addressing helping the
6 mental health of the team members during the stress of isolation.”

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8 10. Board staff inquired if Jesse Taylor had an email or contact name of who exactly
9 from the LNI Wellness Group they were referring to, to which Jesse Taylor forwarded two
10 emails to Board staff from April 2020. According to Jesse Taylor, since this was almost five
11 years ago, they don’t specifically recall the origin of the email, but they believe it was likely
12 something they learned from an online seminar they signed up for.

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14 11. Upon review of the forwarded emails, one was an email confirmation sent to
15 Jesse Taylor regarding an online class they registered for “Leading Teams and Supporting
16 Employees through COVID-19”, which took place on April 9, 2020. The second email
17 forwarded was from the LNI Wellness Group, titled “Wellness Wednesday,” sent on April 6,
18 2020. The body of the email invited LNI employees to “tune in” on April 7, 2020, for a mental
19 health talk being presented by LNI’s Mental Health First Aid Instructor.

20 21 **III. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

22 1. The Board has jurisdiction to hear this matter pursuant to RCW 42.52.360(1),
23 which authorizes the Board to enforce the Ethics in Public Service Act, chapter 42.52 RCW,
24 with respect to employees in the executive branch of state government. The Board has
25 jurisdiction over Jesse Taylor, whose actions occurred while they were a state employee.
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1 Based on the evidence reviewed, Jesse Taylor has used state resources for their private benefit
2 or gain in violation of RCW 42.52.160. Jesse Taylor's activities do not meet the exceptions for
3 the use of state resources as permitted in WAC 292-110-010.

4 2. RCW 42.52.160(1) – Use of persons, money, or property for private gain, states:

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

8 Under WAC 292-110-010 Use of state resources states, in part:

9 (3) **Permitted personal use of state resources.** This subsection applies to any use of
state resources not included in subsection (2) of this section.

10 (a) A state officer or employee's use of state resources is de minimis only if each
of the following conditions are met:

- 11 (i) There is little or no cost to the state;
12 (ii) Any use is brief;
13 (iii) Any use occurs infrequently;
14 (iv) The use does not interfere with the performance of any state officer's
or employee's official duties;
15 (v) The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state
property, information systems, or software;
16 (vi) The use is not for the purpose of conducting an outside business, in
furtherance of private employment, or to realize a private financial gain;
and
17 (vii) The use is not for supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting
for an outside organization or group.

18 3. The Board is authorized to impose sanctions for violations to the Ethics Act
pursuant to RCW 42.52.360.

19 4. In determining the appropriateness of the civil penalty, the criteria in WAC 292-
20 120-030 have been reviewed.

21 **IV. ORDER OF DEFAULT AND FINAL ORDER**

22 Based on the foregoing, the Board:

23 FINDS the Respondent, Jesse Taylor, failed to file a response and/or request a hearing
24 within 30 days after proper service of the Board's reasonable cause determination in this matter and
25 after proper service of notice of the right to request an adjudicative hearing.
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1 CONCLUDES that the Respondent, Jesse Taylor, is in default under the provisions of
2 RCW 34.05.440(1) and WAC 292-100-060(3).

3 IT IS ORDERED that pursuant to RCW 34.05.440(1) and WAC 292-100-060(3) the Board
4 may proceed to resolve this case without further notice to, or hearing for the benefit of, Respondent
5 Jesse Taylor.

6 IT IS HEREBY FURTHER ORDERED Respondent Jesse Taylor is liable for and shall
7 pay a civil penalty of two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500). The payment shall be made to
8 the Executive Ethics Board within forty-five (45) days of this Order.

9 DATED this 12th day of September 2025.

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12 Kelli Hooke, Chair


Cam Comfort, Member

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15 Megan Abel, Vice Chair


David Hankins, Member

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Mark Rapozo, Member

18 APPEAL RIGHTS

19 RECONSIDERATION OF FINAL ORDER – BOARD

20 Any party may ask the Executive Ethics Board to reconsider a Final Order. The request
21 must be in writing and must include the specific grounds or reasons for the request. The request
22 must be delivered to Board office within 10 days after the postmark date of this order.

23 The Board is deemed to have denied the request for reconsideration if, within 20 days
24 from the date the request is filed, the Board does not either dispose of the petition or serve the
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1 parties with written notice specifying the date by which it will act on the petition.
2 RCW 34.05.470.

3 The Respondent is not required to ask the Board to reconsider the Final Order before
4 seeking judicial review by a superior court. RCW 34.05.470.

5 **FURTHER APPEAL RIGHTS – SUPERIOR COURT**

6 A Final Order issued by the Executive Ethics Board is subject to judicial review under
7 the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW. See RCW 42.52.440. The procedures
8 are provided in RCW 34.05.510 - .598.

9 The petition for judicial review must be filed with the superior court and served on the
10 Board and any other parties within 30 days of the date that the Board serves this Final Order on
11 the parties. RCW 34.05.542(2).

12 A petition for review must set forth:

- 13 (1) The name and mailing address of the petitioner;
- 14 (2) The name and mailing address of the petitioner's attorney, if any;
- 15 (3) The name and mailing address of the agency whose action is at issue;
- 16 (4) Identification of the agency action at issue, together with a duplicate copy, summary,
17 or brief description of the agency action;
- 18 (5) Identification of persons who were parties in any adjudicative proceedings that led to
19 the agency action;
- 20 (6) Facts to demonstrate that the petitioner is entitled to obtain judicial review;
- 21 (7) The petitioner's reasons for believing that relief should be granted; and
- 22 (8) A request for relief, specifying the type and extent of relief requested.
23 RCW 34.05.546.

24 **ENFORCEMENT OF FINAL ORDERS**

25 If there is no timely request for reconsideration, this is the Final Order of the Board. The
26 Respondent is legally obligated to pay any penalty assessed.

1 The Board will seek to enforce a Final Order in superior court and recover legal costs
2 and attorney's fees if the penalty remains unpaid and no petition for judicial review has been
3 timely filed under chapter 34.05 RCW. This action will be taken without further order by the
4 Board.