

# Lies, Betrayal and Hidden Agenda-DeRoche's Underhanded Schemes Harm Voters

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Lynn DeRoche is a candidate for Cascade County Clerk and Recorder who has a proven track record on which to base her future performance. And fortunately, we have the benefit of a person who has investigated the performance of Lynn DeRoche. I introduce to you Steven T. Potts, attorney for the plaintiffs against Fort Shaw Irrigation District (FSID), the Cascade County Clerk and Recorder's office, and the Cascade County Commissioners.

Attorney Potts began a court brief in Cause N. ADV-23-255 in the Eighth District Court in Cascade County in this way:

"As former President Donald J. Trump recently said, "In some ways we're a third-world country... [W]e're a third-world country at our election." See The Independent, "Trump Claims US Elections Are 'Third World' Despite Sweeping Super Tuesday Primaries," 3/6/2024. The 2023 Fort Shaw Irrigation District (FSID) election conducted by Cascade County, including an election office administrator who did not know what she was doing and undermined by undependable and malevolent people, serves as a prime example. Together, they manipulated information about voting processes, deterred voters from casting ballots, and allowed others to cast ballots based on phony designation of agents."

Continuing, Attorney Potts writes, "Manipulation information about voting processes and deterring voters from accessing polling sites are two of the "many ways to prevent the casting of votes." National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Securing The Vote: Protecting American Democracy (2018) at 85-86. Here, with assistance from the Cascade County Election Office, the Fort Shaw Irrigation District provided incorrect information [to] electors that was based upon outdated statutes, laziness, and a lie..."

These are strong words and his words become stronger:

**"The bungling here was not one simple mistake by one person. It involved layers of bungling by all of the following bunglers, some of which was negligent and some of which was intentional."**

Below is part of the list of who Potts believes are responsible.

1. Lynn DeRoche, election office employee
2. A FSID clerk
3. FSID Board of Commissioners
4. All Cascade County Commissioners who voted to certify the election
5. Cascade County Attorney (Josh Racke's Office-advising the Cascade County Commission)

Potts' investigation reveals that "...Lynn DeRoche, an employee of the Cascade County election office, wrote to newly elected Clerk

and Recorder/Election Administrator, Sandra Merchant, advising her incorrectly by stating that "if there are joint property owners only one owner will get the vote. So, there must be a designated voting authority sent to all joint property owners."

This advice was incorrect and led to DeRoche having to continue to misadvise Clerk Merchant in order for DeRoche to cover-up her mistake, according to Potts' brief "... Election Office employee, Lynn DeRoche, engaged in nefarious conduct designed to bury designations already on file." DeRoche had worked in elections at Cascade County for many years. This wasn't her first rodeo, but she was loyal to the previous Democrat Clerk and Recorder, Rena Moore, and speculation is she intentionally sabotaged newly elected Clerk and Recorder Sandra Merchant. Voters have every right to question whether Lynn DeRoche is truly a Republican.

Potts then concluded that DeRoche decided to disregard the statute governing the election and "pull the wool" over the electors eyes.

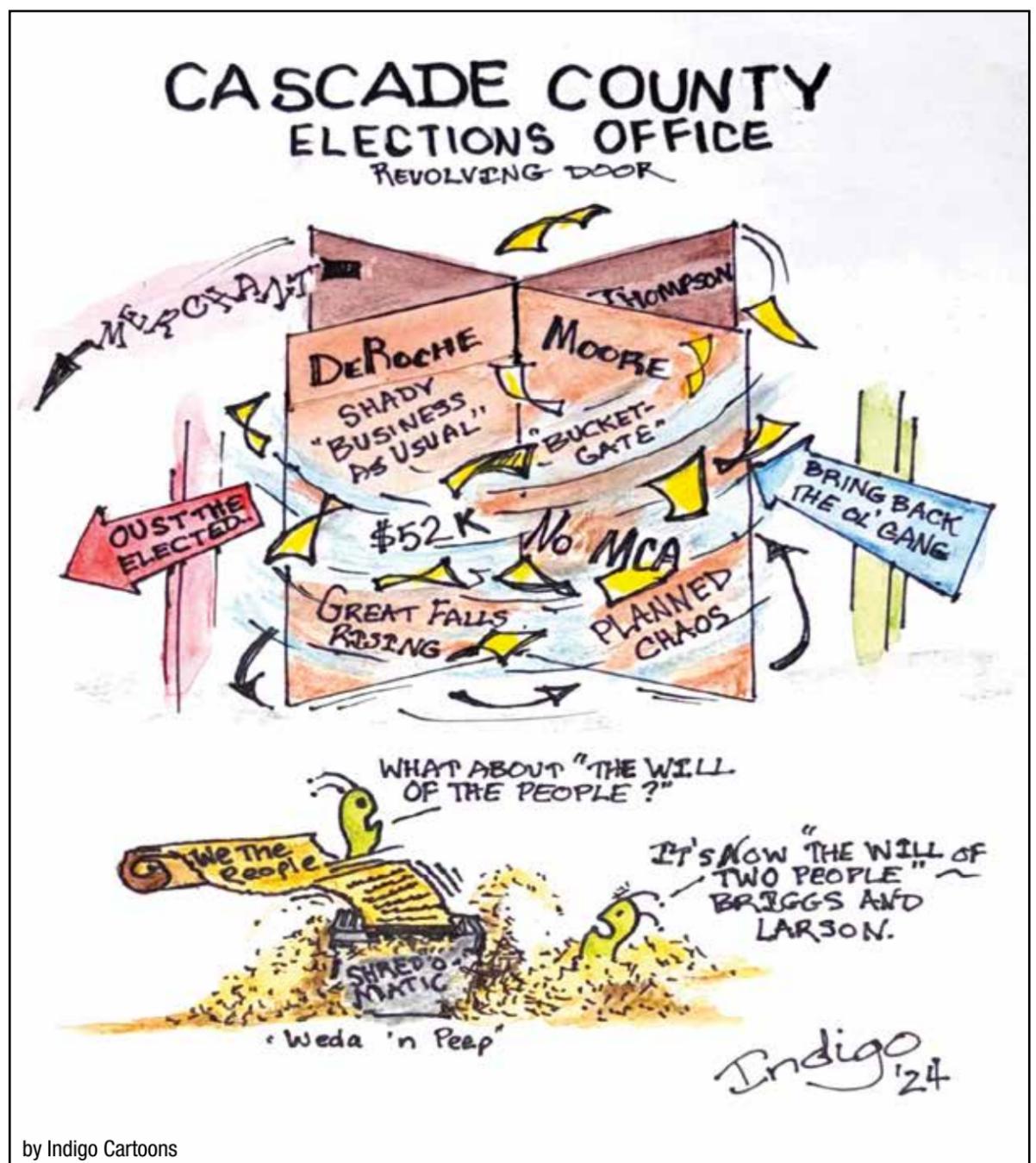
As a result, some landowners were denied their rightful shares of votes in the election. Some landowners, because of joint ownership, were denied any votes at all.

Attorney Potts' asserts that the Election Office disregarded the statute once the error was discovered and held the elections incorrectly anyway.

The story is troubling because it displays the hazards of not knowing the character and integrity of the people we elect to office. Mistakes are inevitable and forgivable. Even though the election was not conducted properly due to their own mistakes, they forged ahead and held it despite not being in compliance, in hopes that no one would discover the mistake. However, despite being discovered and a lawsuit occurring over it, where attorney Potts and the plaintiffs he represented won their case, the county was never held accountable for its mistake. The irony of the situation, is that DeRoche should have been fired, but instead they attacked newly elected Clerk and Recorder Sandra Merchant instead, and stripped the election responsibilities from her. Despite Lynn DeRoche being culpable and responsible for the irrigation ditch election debacle, she was never disciplined and she is hoping Cascade County voters continue to be ignorant over her culpability in the matter.

Cascade County's Voters only choice in the Primary election this June 2<sup>nd</sup> is Deserae Valentine.

Steve Vinnedge, Great Falls



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