

Washington State Ethics Board
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ETHICS COMPLAINT AGAINST SECRETARY OF STATE STEVE HOBBS

Summary of Complaint: Secretary of State Steve Hobbs (“Secretary Hobbs”) is using public funds to pay an offshore artificial intelligence company to surveil voters. Speech objectionable to Secretary Hobbs is “fact-checked,” reported as a “threat,” and suppressed. It is unethical and illegal to use public funds to aid Secretary Hobbs and/or his political party in suppressing opposition views. Such government censorship is a spreading cancer in our society.¹

Ethical Duties Violated: The Secretary of State is a constitutional officer entrusted with the fair and unbiased conduct of elections.² Secretary Hobbs has violated his oath of office, the United States and Washington constitutions, and the laws of the state of Washington. Specifically, he has violated:

Oath of Office: Before he could enter into his office Secretary Hobbs was required to take this oath: *“I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the state of Washington, and that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Secretary of State to the best of my ability.”* RCW 43.01.020.

United States Constitution: Government may take no action “abridging the freedom of speech.” Constitution of the United States, Amendment 1.

State Constitution: Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right. Washington State Constitution Article I, Section 5.

Proper Discharge of Office: No state officer or state employee may have an interest, financial or otherwise, direct or indirect, or engage in a business or transaction or professional activity, or incur an obligation of any nature, that is in conflict with the proper discharge of the state officer's or state employee's official duties. RCW 42.52.020.

Electioneering at Public Expense: No state officer or state employee may use or authorize the use of facilities of an agency, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition. Knowing acquiescence by a person with authority to direct, control, or influence the actions of the state officer or state employee using public resources . . . constitutes a violation of this section. RCW 42.52.180.

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1. Exhibit 1: November 8, 2023 letter from 27 state legislators to Oregon Secretary of State protesting use of *Logically* to surveil citizens; Oregon Free Speech Lawsuit Thielman v Kotek, <https://cleanvoterrolls.com/>; Biden administration efforts to suppress speech it does not like; <https://www.dailynews.com/2023/11/27/ron-paul-big-tech-censorship-is-a-problem-created-by-big-government/>.
 2. Secretary Hobbs is a member of the “Democratic” party. However, his party is not the issue, the same conduct by a member of any other party would be equally unethical.

Information Security & Response Division: Secretary Hobbs has created, despite the legislature's rejection of such a program, an Information Security & Response Division.³ This new division contracts with *Logically*,⁴ an off-shore artificial intelligence surveillance company, to scour the internet and suppress any statements by citizens critical of Secretary Hobbs, his office, or his policies.⁵

Secretary Hobbs refuses to let the public see the *Logically* contract.⁶ But the draft Statement of Work for the contract has been obtained.⁷ The cost is at least \$147,600. It is a “sole source” contract. Surveillance began even before the contract was approved.⁸ The political surveillance is by election period, running through the next statewide general election.

Protection from threats to “electoral integrity” and “threats targeting the Secretary of State or staff” is the proffered justification for monitoring and suppressing free speech. The scope of work includes monitoring voter communications in order to alert Secretary Hobbs of critical or unwelcome “narratives,” providing bi-weekly analysis, and producing reports of citizen comments, trends, and statistics. *Logically* provides briefings to Secretary Hobbs and “outside stakeholders.”

Surveillance & Suppression: *Logically* monitors internet speech including X, Rumble, Truth Social, Substack, and others. It conspires with Facebook to label citizen comments as false, apply warning labels, and suppress distribution of the unwelcome speech.⁹ This allows Secretary Hobbs to suppress and abridge free speech on a massive scale.

Logically refers to free speech selected for suppression as “narratives.”¹⁰ Examples are:

July 24, 2023: People online were discussing whether updating signatures by mail enables voter fraud, and whether verification of citizenship should be required. *Logically* reports this is possibly harmful because it could “Generate calls for King County election officials to require in-person verification of the current addresses and citizenship for registered voters.”¹¹

August 10, 2023: People online were identified as a narrative threat because they discussed whether mail-in ballots enable fraud. *Logically* reports this is possibly harmful because it could “Motivate individuals to call on officials to ban mail-in ballots and advocate for in-person voting.”¹²

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3. House Bill 1333-2023-24, which would have created a commission on disinformation and misinformation, did not make it out of committee.
 4. [“TheLogically LTD” \(sic\) is incorporated in the United Kingdom under company number 10850644.](#)
 5. Exhibit 2: *Logically* promotional materials. Artificial intelligence is used to identify and suppress information its client deems “Mis-and-Disinformation.”
 6. Exhibit 3: The contract was requested on October 19, 2023; Secretary Hobbs has not produced it.
 7. Exhibit 4: Draft Statement of Work for *Logically* contract, June 12, 2023.
 8. Exhibit 5: Email from Director of Information Security & Response to *Logically*.
 9. <https://web.archive.org/web/20231113113040/https://www.logically.ai/press/logically-announces-uk-fact-checking-partnership-with-facebook>.
 10. [Logically election reports available here.](#)
 11. Exhibit 6: Alert 13 King County Initiative to Update Voter Signatures Via Mail Enables Voter Fraud, July 24, 2023.
 12. Exhibit 7: Alert 18 Washington State Election Officials Mailed Excess Ballots Which Enabled Voter Fraud, August 10, 2023.

August 31, 2023: People online were discussing why a ballot envelope was required to show the party preference on the outside. *Logically* reports this is possibly harmful because it could “Motivate individuals to protest the requirement that voters disclose their political party preference.”¹³

Nothing in these reports justifies the expenditure of public funds; there is no public benefit. If there were any “threat” against Secretary Hobbs it would be a matter for a law enforcement agency, not a justification for surveilling and suppressing speech.

The political nature of the surveillance is blatant. Secretary Hobbs has targeted the Chairman of the Washington State Republican Party, Jim Walsh, and the Chairman of the State Republican Party Election Integrity Committee, Bill Bruch.¹⁴ Using public funds to target political opposition and to suppress free speech is a defining trait of tyranny, the very tyranny our constitutions and laws were implemented to prevent.

Conclusion: The oath of office taken by Secretary Hobbs requires that he conduct elections in a fair, transparent, and nonpartisan manner. Every person must have the right to freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, without the speech being abridged by government actors, being intimidated by state surveillance, reported to state officials as a “threat”, or punished as the spreader of a “narrative” unwelcome by the state. Secretary Hobbs cannot be allowed to use his office to surveil, suppress, and hinder free debate; especially when that debate is critical of him.

Secretary Hobb's unethical and illegal conduct can be mitigated only by immediately declaring the unconstitutional contract with *Logically* void as against public policy, refusing to accept any further services under the contract, and publicly committing to conduct elections in a fair and transparent manner. There can be no democracy without free speech; when a government founded on democracy suppresses free speech, it destroys its own legitimacy.

Submitted this 29th day of November, 2023 by the Washington State Republican Party on behalf of all citizens and residents.

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13. Exhibit 8: Election Alert 26 Election Officials Reject Ballots Based on Voters’ Listed Political Party Preference, August 31, 2023.
 14. Exhibit 9-1: Alert 30 Procedural Lapse in King County Primary Election Enabled Potential Fraud, September 14, 2023; Exhibit 9-2: Alert 13 King County Initiative to Update Voter Signatures Via Mail Enables Voter Fraud, July 24, 2023; Exhibit 9-3: Alert 5 Emerging Narrative WA State Recount Methods are Ineffectual and Enable Voter Fraud, June 28, 2023.