

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-6 OF THE LA PORTE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADDING WHISTLEBLOWER
LANGUAGE TO EXISTING COUNTY HANDBOOK PROTECTIONS
FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES AGAINST RETALIATION

WHEREAS, this body in June, 2020 adopted protections for county employees reporting violations of EEO and anti-harassment policies that are now set forth in Section 19, pages 23-24 of the county employee handbook, and

WHEREAS, whistleblower protections currently exist in state and federal law to allow employees to report or testify about employer actions that are illegal, unhealthy or violate specific public policies such as the protection afforded under Indiana law for employees who complain about workplace safety and health related concerns, and

WHEREAS, this Board wishes to convey to all La Porte County employees that we require all elected officials, department heads, supervisors, vendors, suppliers and professional advisors to conduct their activities fairly, impartially in an ethical and proper manner and we desire full protection for any employee who files a legitimate grievance or complaint regarding waste, fraud or abuse of public resources or complains about gross abuse of authority,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS BOARD THAT THE FOLLOWING IS ADDED AS A NEW SECTION 19, PAGE 25 TO THE COUNTY EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK STATING AS FOLLOWS:

Section 19. Whistleblower protection for employees filing valid complaints alleging waste, fraud or abuse of public resources as well as gross abuse of authority

A whistleblower as defined by this policy is an employee of La Porte County who reports an activity that he/she considers to be illegal, dishonest or a gross abuse of authority to their supervisor and/or Human Resources. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate officials in the Human Resources Department are charged with these responsibilities. Furthermore, whistleblower complaints may be lodged against any elected official, department head, supervisor, vendor, supplier or professional advisor of the county alleged to be committing or allowing waste, fraud or abuse of public resources or committing a gross abuse of authority.

Examples of illegal or dishonest activities are violations of federal, state or local laws; billing for services not performed or for goods not delivered; and other fraudulent financial reporting.

If an employee has knowledge of or a concern of illegal, fraudulent activity or a gross abuse of authority, the employee is to contact his/her immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Director or the Ethics/Compliance officer working in or for the Human Resources Department. The employee must exercise sound judgment to avoid baseless allegations. An employee who intentionally files a false report of wrongdoing will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

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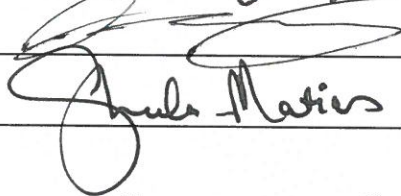
Whistleblower protections are provided in two important areas – confidentiality and against retaliation. Insofar as possible, the confidentiality of the whistleblower will be maintained. However, identity may have to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the law and to provide accused individuals with their legal rights of defense. The County will not tolerate any retaliation against a whistleblower. This includes, but is not limited to, protection from retaliation in the form of an adverse employment action such as termination, compensation decreases, or poor work assignments and threats of physical harm. Any whistleblower who believes he/she is being retaliated against must contact the Human Resources Director immediately. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity for any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated.

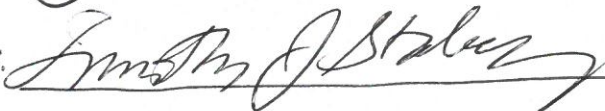
All reports of illegal and dishonest activities must be promptly submitted to the Director of Human Resources whose office is responsible for investigating, coordinating **and proposing corrective action along with referring to other investigative agencies, if warranted.** Employees with any questions regarding this policy should contact the Director of Human Resources.

All of which is adopted this 21st day of April, 2021

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS





attest: 

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