



BOBBY JINDAL
GOVERNOR

STEPHEN B. STREET, JR.
STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL

State of Louisiana
Office of the Governor
Office of State Inspector General

February 20, 2013

Honorable Bobby Jindal
Governor of the State of Louisiana
P.O. Box 94004
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9004

Re: Louisiana Auctioneers' Licensing Board

Dear Governor Jindal:

In response to a request from your office, we investigated a complaint concerning the manner in which two members of the Louisiana Auctioneers' Licensing Board (LALB) answered the roll during a public meeting on November 5, 2012. The complaint alleged that Vice Chairman James Sims and At Large Board Member Gregory Bordelon answered the roll with the intention to offend Reverend Freddie Phillips, a former LALB member who was not present at the meeting.

An audio recording of the meeting confirmed that when Mr. Sims' name was called for the roll, he replied, "I's here." When Mr. Bordelon's name was subsequently called, he replied, "I's here, too." Mr. Sims and Mr. Bordelon also each confirmed in interviews with our office that they answered the roll in this manner. However, our investigation found no evidence to support the allegation of malicious intent directed at Rev. Phillips or anyone else.

Mr. Sims stated to us that he is a "diabetic" and has "dentures" which sometimes cause him to speak unclearly. He stated, "Sometimes things come out wrong." He also stated that he had not listened to the recording of the November 5, 2012 meeting but, "What I's said, I said." It was noted that Mr. Sims stated "I's" during our interview and that it appeared to be an unintentional part of his dialect. Mr. Sims further referred to his use of "I's here" as "Southern slang." Mr. Sims also stated that from his seated position during board meetings, he cannot see the audience. He, therefore, did not know whether Rev. Phillips was at the meeting.

Mr. Bordelon stated to us that he intentionally answered "I's here, too" when his name was called for the roll because he was responding to Mr. Sims' reply to the roll call. Mr. Bordelon stated that Sims is a "north Louisiana redneck" with a north Louisiana accent. Mr. Bordelon also stated that he has heard Mr. Sims use similar slang in other situations and has mocked Mr. Sims in a friendly manner for the way he speaks. According to Mr. Bordelon, his reply of "I's here, too" was merely the same friendly mocking of Mr. Sims' speech.

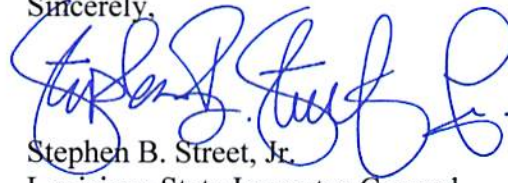
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Additional interviews with other board members revealed that no one present found the comments offensive. According to those board members, they did not remember what was said during the roll call until after reviewing the audio recording. Members stated they remembered the meeting being loose and relaxed because no members of the public were in attendance, and that the laughter heard on the recording after Mr. Bordelon's response was a reaction to Mr. Bordelon's repeating Mr. Sims' response. All board members stated that the roll call replies were not the result of any conversations that had taken place before the recording began, nor were they intended to offend Rev. Phillips or anyone else.

Given the above, we are closing our file and taking no further action in this matter. Please also be aware that, upon your receipt of this letter, it will be considered a public document subject to disclosure pursuant to a proper public records request to this office.

If you or anyone on your staff have questions or wish to discuss the matter further, please feel free to call me at (225) 342-4262 or e-mail me at Stephen.street@la.gov.

Sincerely,



Stephen B. Street, Jr.
Louisiana State Inspector General

cc: Tessa Steinkamp, LALB Chairperson