



August 27, 2022

Ryan Binkley, President and CEO
Andy Pennington, Publisher
David Hulen, Editor
% Anchorage Daily News

Mr. Binkley, Mr. Pennington, and Mr. Hulen:

The Dunleavy for Governor Campaign is writing to you today concerning an undisclosed conflict of interest regarding the reporter you have assigned to cover the gubernatorial race, Sean Maguire.

It has come to our attention that Mr. Maguire's wife, City and Borough of Juneau Assembly Member Carole Triem, is actively and publicly supporting one of the candidates in this race, former state Representative Les Gara. Ms. Triem's recent social media posts on both Facebook and Twitter have included pictures of her with Mr. Gara, sign-waving for Mr. Gara, encouraging people to vote for Mr. Gara, and a number of comments that are critical of both Governor Mike Dunleavy and former Governor Bill Walker. As recently as August 19, Ms. Triem posted "Bro, high five, bro!" in response to a series of Tweets linking to articles critical of Governor Dunleavy (screenshots attached).

According to the [New York Times Handbook for Ethical Journalism](#) regarding conflicts of interest, "Staff members must be sensitive that perfectly proper political activity by their spouses, family or companions may nevertheless create conflicts of interest or the appearances of conflict. When such a possibility arises, the staff member should advise his or her department head and the standards editor or the opinion editor or the managing editor. Depending on the circumstances, the staff member may have to recuse himself or herself from certain coverage or even move to a job unrelated to the activities in question."

In light of this guidance from the New York Times, it is clear that at a minimum Ms. Triem's political activity creates the appearance of a conflict of interest for Mr. Maguire's reporting, if not an actual conflict.

We therefore have the following questions for you, the leadership of the ADN:

- What is the ADN policy regarding conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflict for reporting staff?
- Did Mr. Maguire disclose his potential conflict of interest to his supervisors at the ADN when he was hired, and if so, what was the basis for the decision to assign him to covering the gubernatorial election in spite of this conflict?
- If he did not disclose this potential conflict of interest, will the ADN now include a disclaimer in future articles regarding the gubernatorial election that informs readers about Ms. Triem's political activity so that they may decide for themselves whether Mr. Maguire's reporting is fair to all the candidates?
- If the leadership of the ADN decides that Ms. Triem's political activity creates an unacceptable appearance of conflict, if not an actual conflict, will Mr. Maguire be recused from covering the gubernatorial election? (We would also note that Ms. Triem is also publicly and actively supporting a candidate in the U.S. House race, Ms. Mary Peltola.)

To be certain, Ms. Triem's activity and support for any candidate is protected under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. In our statements to Mr. Maguire and other members of the media, our campaign has cited these same rights to free speech and assembly in response to questions about members of the Dunleavy administration who are volunteering their personal time in support of his reelection. However, while public officials and members of the press enjoy First Amendment rights like any other American, we are held to a higher standard of disclosure and transparency. Members of the Dunleavy administration who are volunteering during their personal time are in compliance with all state laws and policies regarding ethics disclosures and the prohibition against campaign activities on public time.

On the other hand, the ADN has not, to our knowledge, been transparent in the case of Mr. Maguire's appearance of conflict or actual conflict of interest concerning Ms. Triem's support of a candidate, and her critical comments about other candidates, in the very election he's been assigned to cover.

Without such transparency and adherence to standards set by media organizations such as the New York Times, the ADN's coverage of the gubernatorial election will rightfully be viewed with suspicion by both readers and the other candidates in this race. As the leaders of the ADN, we trust that your interest lies first in foremost with upholding a reputation for fair reporting that is free of conflict, or the appearance of conflict.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and we look forward to your responses to these important questions.

Best regards,

Andrew Jensen

Spokesperson, Dunleavy for Governor

Cc: Dunleavy for Governor media distribution list

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