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“Public Trust” is Paramount in Election Administration

Pasco, WA, September 24, 2025 — Not everyone in Washington State elections agrees with Secretary of State Steve Hobbs' response to the DOJ.

On Thursday, September 18th, I was fortunate to sit down with Secretary Hobbs, his leadership team, and Franklin County Administrator Brian Dansel. Secretary Hobbs, from time to time, visits County Auditors, tours election centers, and seeks feedback. The meeting was collegial. While discussing election security, the topic of the DOJ data request came up and dominated most of the conversation. He listened to and discussed points raised, but ultimately disagreed on the path forward.

A letter summarizing Franklin County's position was provided to him at the end of that meeting. If Washington State's goal in elections is to maintain public trust in our voter registration database, the best and boldest step forward is to cooperate fully with the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division's request. He focused on his concern about voters' nonpublic data. I first noted that much of this data was furnished by the government and even suggested that he could establish the manner and method in which the data was delivered, going so far as to suggest that the review be done only on-site in Olympia.

Complete cooperation is the only way to avoid the appearance of “hiding something”. Secretary Hobbs disagreed. I hope he reconsiders his decision.

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