

April 2009

NomineeAlert



this issue:

Ron Sims

Nominee for Deputy Secretary of
Housing and Urban Development

Sim's Background

King County Executive

King County Councilman

Democrat Candidate for
Governor of Washington

Democrat Candidate for U.S.
Senate

Legislative Aide, Washington
State Senate

Investigator, Washington State
Attorney General

Investigator, Federal Trade
Commission

EDUCATION

B.A. Central Washington
University

Who is Ron Sims?

See No Evil, Hear No Evil...

On March 4 President Obama nominated Ron Sims to be Deputy Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

the country for research. In spite of these scandals, the chief medical examiner remains in office. Fn.1

Ron Sims has been King County Executive since 1996 when he was chosen to succeed Gary Locke, who had been elected governor. On Sims' watch, the medical examiner's

“Use of King County funds for these extraneous purposes is not authorized by law.”

—Ron Sims, in reference to using wastewater funds for unrelated mitigation projects

King County is now being sued for misusing funds set aside for wastewater. To get a neighboring county to allow a new sewer treatment plant to be located there, King County

office was run unprofessionally and disrespectfully. Bodies lay on the floor, crude language and gestures were common, harmful chemicals were poured down the drain illegally, a body was lost, and a weekly contest to pick the most disgusting photo of the dead was held. Seven employees left over five years. They alleged a hostile work environment, sexual harassment, and retaliation; the county spent at least \$200,000 investigating and settling the claims.

The medical examiner's office sent the brains of 255 mentally ill people to a lab in Maryland in exchange for over \$1.3 million. In most cases, the families of the dead were unaware that the entire brain and other body parts were being sent across

agreed to pay for improvements projects there. These improvements were funded from the wastewater fund. King County also agreed to buy a soup company that was located near the site of the plant. These giveaways total over \$100 million. If the court sides with the plaintiffs, King County will have to spend tens of millions of dollars to reimburse the fund it raided.

Worst of all, Ron Sims knew that it may well have been an illegal use of funds. In a 2005 letter, he wrote, “Use of King County funds for these extraneous purposes is not authorized by law.” Fn. 2

More information you really need to know about Ron Sims

Sources for further reading:

"Examiner's supervisor suspended" found at <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?slug=examiner03m&date=20031203>. (Accessed April 3, 2009.)

"Drug arrest at medical examiner's office" Available online at: found at http://www.seattlepi.com/local/373501_oxycontin05.html. (Accessed April 3, 2009.)

"Report rips King County animal shelters" found at http://www.seattlepi.com/local/355311_animal18.html. (Accessed April 3, 2009.)

"Florida With Rain" found at <http://www.opinionjournal.com/diary/?id=110006543>. (Accessed April 3, 2009.)

U.S. Department of Justice Finding Letter found at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/split/documents/king_county_findlet_11-13-07.pdf. (Accessed April 3, 2009.)

Sims gave a low-interest rate HUD loan of \$8 million to Multi-Employer Property Trust (a union pension fund manager) and Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (one of the largest hotel and casino operators in the world). The loan was used to build a four-star Westin hotel at the Seattle Tacoma International Airport. The loan's low interest rate, at about half that of a standard loan, could have saved the owners up to \$6 million on a \$58 million hotel. These loans typically are given to non-profits, low-income housing developers, and social service agencies. According to HUD, this program is intended to "help fuel large economic development projects and other revitalization activities" in areas that are "distressed." Seattle's international airport is certainly not a distressed area. *The Seattle Times* criticized the deal. Fn. 3

On Sims' watch, the King County Jail was investigated by the U.S. Justice Department. In a report, the Justice Department asserted that five inmates died preventable deaths. The Justice Department also wrote that King County inmates were at a "grave risk of harm" and concluded that the jail violates inmates' civil rights by using excessive force and failing to provide adequate medical care. Fn. 4

On Sims' watch, King County counted ineligible ballots and neglected to count eligible ballots in the 2004 election debacle. On the second recount, Christine Gregoire finally "won" the governorship by 129. Sims had nothing but high praise for Dean Logan, his appointed elections director. Sims even lamented Logan's resignation despite the department's serious morale, training, communication, and staffing problems. Also on Sims' watch, two convicted felons worked on contracts with the county elections division. The county did not perform background checks on them, and both were employed for several years. An embezzler, who had concealed his theft of over \$400,000 by altering computer records, worked on election software. Fn. 5

For years, Ron Sim's county executive office lied and refused to provide documents that it was legally required to provide to Armen Yousoufian, who was investigating the county's Qwest Field deal. The county was ordered to pay Yousoufian over \$120,000 for its outrageous behavior—the largest such fine in state history. And it's not over yet: the state supreme court has ordered a lower court to increase the fine. Fn. 6

Fn. 1

- <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?slug=webbrain08&date=20050408>
- http://www.king5.com/localnews/investigators/stories/NW_111907INV_me_office_KS.123315df.html

Fn. 2

- <http://crosscut.com/2008/09/17/law-justice/17711/>

Fn. 3

- <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?slug=2785080&date=19981123>
- <http://www.seattleweekly.com/1998-11-25/news/four-star-financing/>
- <http://eatthestate.org/03-11/RonSimsBaggage.htm>

Fn.4

- <http://www.seattleweekly.com/content/printVersion/435847>
- http://www.seattlepi.com/local/396295_jail16.html

Fn. 5

- <http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?slug=felons11m0&date=20040211>
- http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/printer2/index.asp?ploc=b&refer=http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/273692_logan13.html
- http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/news/2005/02_February/09_ElectionsRemarks.htm
- http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2002351570_elections29m.html
- http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/local/122873_director21.html

Fn. 6

- <http://www.theolympian.com/109/story/737022.html>
- <http://www.seattleweekly.com/2002-07-17/news/and-the-game-goes-on/>

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