



Publication of Information in the Public Interest

Related to Case 2026-14

Ethics Rule 6.9 Confidentiality of Complaint or Investigation

"Unless the Commission determines that a complaint or a formal investigation should be made public, all complaints and formal investigations, including documents and discussions in executive session, shall remain confidential and shall not be disclosed[.] ... The Commission may make a complaint or formal investigation and any documents relating thereto public at any time it deems release of that information to be in the public interest."

Pursuant to Rule 6.9 of the Oklahoma Ethics Rules, the Oklahoma Ethics Commission voted on October 8, 2026, to release this statement regarding its investigation involving Governor Kevin Stitt. The Commission determined that public disclosure of this statement serves an educational purpose and advances public understanding of the Ethics Rules and their application.

The Ethics Commission conducted an independent investigation into allegations concerning Governor Stitt's involvement in matters related to Sara Polston. As part of that investigation, the Commission reviewed documentary evidence and conducted numerous witness interviews regarding Polston's incarceration, transfer to custody of the Department of Corrections, and subsequent release to GPS monitoring. Governor Stitt was invited to participate in an interview with the Commission but did not do so.

The investigation established that Polston and her spouse maintained a personal relationship with Governor Stitt and have contributed to his political campaigns. Further evidence demonstrated that following Sara Polston's prosecution and conviction, communications from within the Governor's Office occurred regarding Polston's case. While the investigation identified limited direct involvement by Governor Stitt personally, the evidence showed that communications from within the Governor's Office were made to, and considered by, officials involved in decisions regarding Polston's custody status, transfer, and release.

Based on the evidence reviewed, the Commission determined that evidence exists from which a reasonable person could conclude that the authority and influence of the Governor's office was used in a manner intended to impact individuals charged with determining Polston's status, and it appears likely that these actions influenced decisions relating to Polston's custody and release.

Although the Commission could not determine with certainty the extent to which those communications influenced the ultimate outcome, it found sufficient evidence to raise concerns under the Ethics Rules regarding the use of the authority and influence associated with public office.

Circumstances which may undermine public confidence in the impartial administration of government and the equal treatment of all individuals under the law are of concern to the Commission. Here, when the authority of public office is brought to bear in matters involving personal associates or political supporters of an elected official, the Commission's responsibility is not to determine whether governmental action was ultimately correct or incorrect as a matter of public policy, but rather to evaluate whether the conduct at issue raises concerns under Oklahoma's Ethics Rules governing the use of public office and authority.

Ethics Rule 4.5 provides, in relevant part:

"A state officer ... shall not use or permit the use of his or her office or title or any authority associated with his or her state office, or a state office to which he or she has been elected, in a manner that is intended to coerce or induce another person, including a subordinate, to provide any benefit, financial or otherwise, to himself or herself or to his or her family members or persons with whom the state officer or employee is affiliated in a nongovernmental capacity."