

Excerpts of Margaret Bird's Written Testimony Submitted to the Utah House of Representatives Ethics Committee:

My name is Margaret Ray Bird. I am the director of the School Children's Trust. I am employed by the Utah State Board of Education. I am in attendance at this meeting only because I was subpoenaed by the Legislative Ethics Committee. When I was informed on Monday, September 29, 2008 at 9:30 p.m. that an ethics complaint would be filed and that I was named in the complaint, I was gravely concerned that there would be retaliation against my employer, the Utah State Board of Education, SITLA and the School LAND Trust Program.

During the winter and spring of 2008, I had several experiences that individually and certainly collectively rose to the level of ethics violations by several prominent legislators.

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The Senator [Stephenson] said he was only calling as a friend and that he wanted to share his personal experience with me. That same Senator personally instigated an audit of the School LAND Trust Program that began immediately at the end of the session.

While these incidents were not individually overt threats, I certainly felt that taken as a whole they threatened my employment at the USOE and, more importantly, they put at risk continued funding and support for programs I had worked for, for 30-plus years.