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ALERT FEATURED TOP STORY

Police group files elections complaint against Linn County sheriff

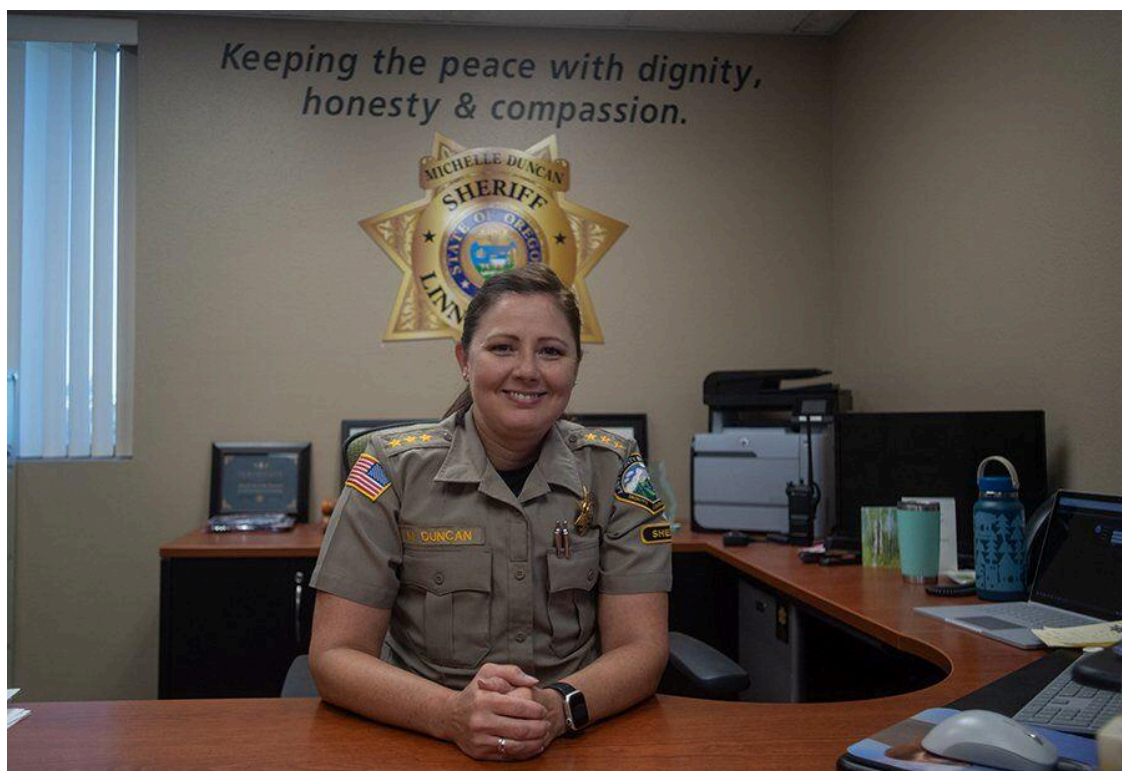
Maddie Pfeifer

Oct 4, 2022

A state police organization has filed an election law complaint against **Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan**, alleging she listed inaccurate information in her voters' pamphlet information.

The Oregon State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police filed the complaint with the Secretary of State Elections Division on Sept. 26.

The letter, written by Portland-based attorney Daniel Thenell, asks the Elections Division to investigate Duncan's alleged violation of an Oregon Revised Statute that states, "A person may not knowingly make a false statement, oath or affidavit when a statement, oath or affidavit is required under the election laws."



Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan speaks on what it would mean to her if voters elected her to the position.

The complaint claims Duncan misled voters regarding her work history. Under occupational background, Duncan said she has been with the Linn County Sheriff's Office from "1997 to present."

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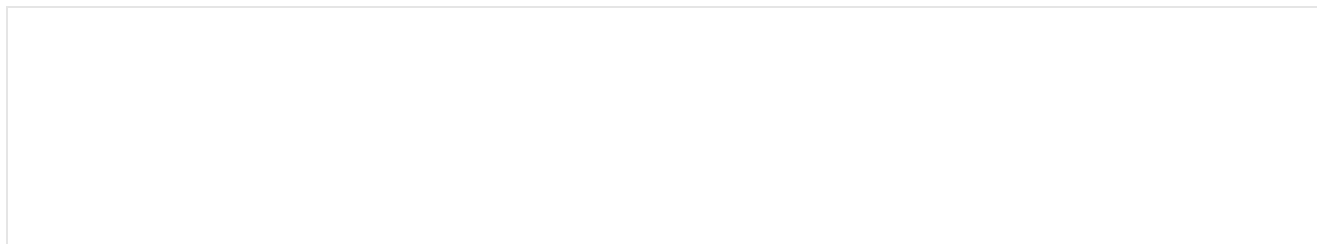
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According to Department of Public Safety Standards and Training records, Duncan left the sheriff's office and joined the Salem Police Department in April 2001. She left Salem PD and rejoined LCSO just a few months later in July 2001.

In a **September interview with Mid-Valley Media**, Duncan said she was living in Mill City at the time and working as a resident deputy in 2001. She said multiple people she had arrested, including a convicted murderer, knew where she lived with her family. Her son was 2 years old at the time, and Duncan said she wanted to keep her family's safety in mind.

But after a short time in Salem, Duncan said she missed the family atmosphere at the Linn County Sheriff's Office and promptly returned to the agency — and "never looked back."

The complaint alleges Duncan is in clear violation of the law by not acknowledging her time in Salem.



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“We respectfully request that the Elections Division investigate this matter and seek appropriate correction to ensure the integrity of our elections,” Thenell wrote.

Secretary of State campaign finance records show the local lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police — located in Harrisburg and known as Central Valley Lodge No. 16 — donated \$5,000 to **Jon Raymond’s campaign**, Duncan’s opponent. The group is also listed as an official Raymond supporter on his voters’ pamphlet information.

Duncan said she did not include her time at Salem PD in the voters’ pamphlet because it was not a significant amount of time in the span of her career. She said she is not trying to hide the fact she left the agency for a few months. Duncan said she has spent the majority every year since 1997 with LCSO.

She added that she believes the complaint is retaliation from a former sheriff's office employee who was unhappy with the agency and is now a leader within the Fraternal Order of Police.

Thenell said the complaint does not have any biased intent and the group voted to file the complaint.

Duncan said she sent her response to the Secretary of State and is awaiting their decision.

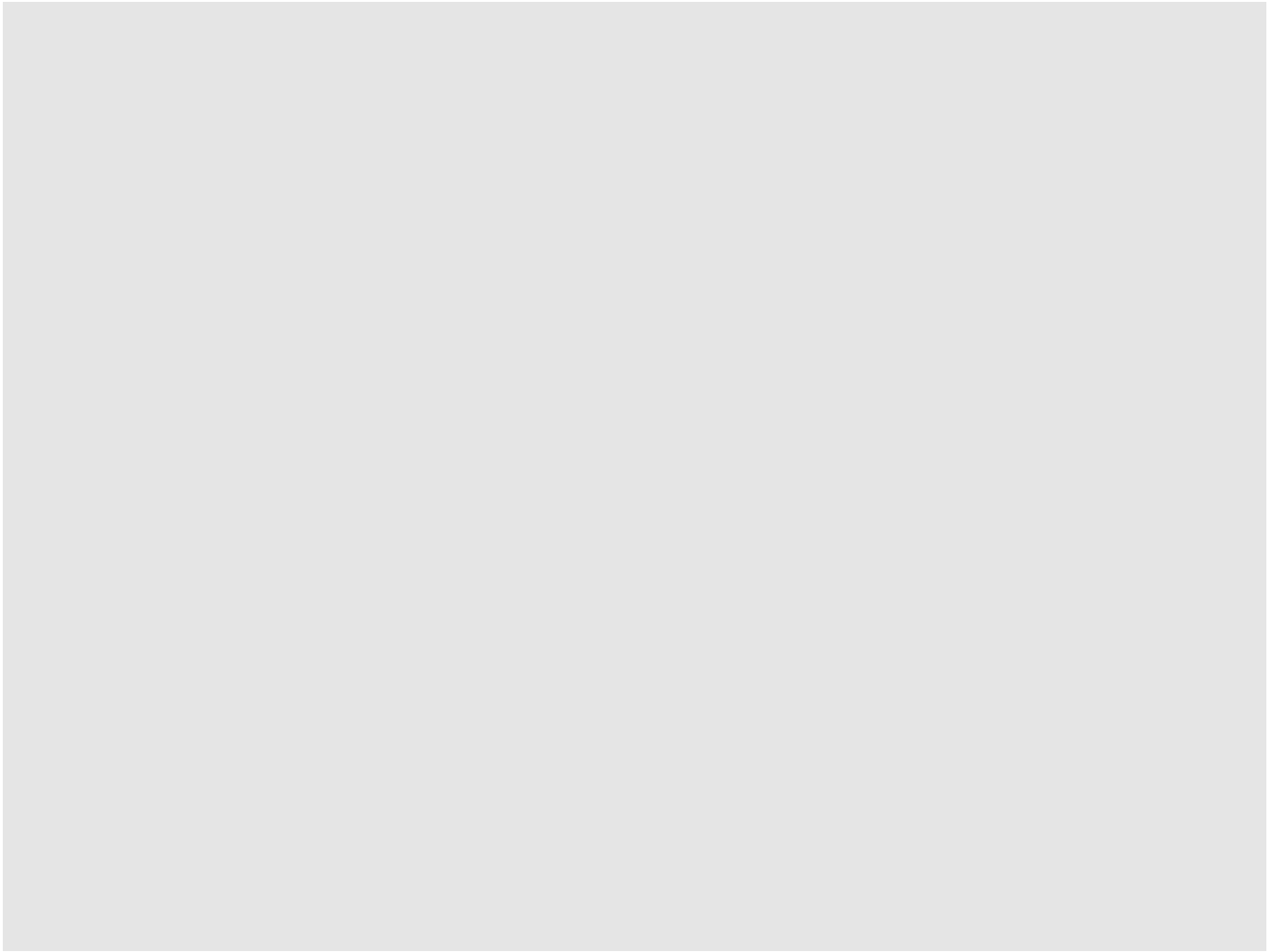
"Elections officials do not edit the contents of a voters' pamphlet statement except in a few specific situations, and this is not one of them," Ben Morris, communications director for the Secretary of State, said in an email.

"Candidates are responsible for the content of the statement, and they may request an edit up until the filing deadline, which was Aug. 30. Duncan's statement will remain as-is."

He added that an investigation had not been completed.

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Linn County Sheriff Michelle Duncan

Kylie Graham, Mid-Valley Media

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By Maddie Pfeifer

Reporter
