

**Acclaim Investigations LLC**  
PO Box 596  
Englewood, CO 80113

Client: Colorado Independent Ethics Commission  
Lawyer: Kyle Dumler  
Investigator: Ann Schrader  
Subject: Laura Warren

March 27, 2014

Ann: This is Ann Schrader with Acclaim Investigations. We're working on behalf of the Colorado Independent Ethics Commission which is taking a look at a complaint filed by Compass Colorado in regard to John Hickenlooper's participation in the Democratic Governors Association Conference in Aspen in July. They've contended that he violated the state gift ban law. We're gathering further information.

Today we have with us Laura Warren, who is John Hickenlooper's Campaign Finance Director, and we also have Chantel Taylor, who is sitting in as counsel.

Who came up with the idea for the Democratic Governors Association Conference?

Laura: Actually, I have no idea. They've been in existence since before I was on board, so I don't know. I apologize.

Ann: How long have you been on board?

Laura: I've been involved with them for the past few years, two or three years.

Ann: Was this something that was planned a long time out then?

Laura: Like I said, they've been going on annually, I think, way before me and before Governor Hickenlooper. Yeah, they're just annual events.

Ann: Was it the DGA that set sort of a schedule of these annual events?

Laura: I believe so. I think they create with Governors across the country.

Ann: It didn't come from campaign staff? It was something that you inherited?

Laura: Yeah.

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Ann: When did you first learn about the conference?

Laura: This last one?

Ann: Yeah. The one in July.

Laura: It had been probably the year before. Like I said, they have them annually, so it's like any other conference where they're annually rescheduling the next one.

Ann: Where had they had them before? Aspen is an awfully nice place to have a conference-

Laura: They have them across the country.

Ann: Do they?

Laura: Yeah. They have policy conferences across the country, and then they have other types of events. Yeah, wherever there's Governors. There's plenty of options.

Ann: As long as they are Democratic Governors, right? Twenty-two of them.

Laura: [crosstalk 00:02:27] Republican Governors.

Ann: The RGA has them too.

Laura: Everyone has them.

Ann: Did somebody from the DGA get ahold of you and talk to you about, this is what we're going to do and this is what we need from you?

Laura: Yup.

Ann: So that was about a year ago then?

Laura: I think ... We're consistently working with them on different things.

Ann: When you learned that this was going to be held in your backyard, who did you get in touch with at the Governor's office to help start planning this thing?

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Laura: His scheduler.

Ann: His scheduler. At that time it was Valerie Beck I believe. Okay. You found out what time he had available.

Laura: Exactly.

Ann: Then let it sit for awhile, and then kept developing the program and stuff like that?

Laura: Yeah. Just to be clear, not with staff. [crosstalk 00:03:33] I'm just programming [crosstalk 00:03:35].

Ann: With the DGA.

Laura: With the DGA.

Ann: It was my understanding, and I've talked to Valerie, it was my understanding that she checked to see what time slot was available. From that point on, as you were setting things up you let her know we need him at this time and...

Laura: Yeah, because the DGA does them around the country, they kind of have a formula.

Ann: Oh, do they?

Laura: Yeah.

Ann: Who at the DGA did you work with then?

Laura: I worked with a few. I worked with their policy people and Kelly sets up ... Kelly Barrens does the logistical ... We work on how many people, the logistical planning of it. Then [inaudible 00:04:24] Patel.

Ann: Okay.

Laura: Then at [inaudible 00:04:25] they have a smaller shop, so they throw different people in at different times.

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- Ann: What exactly did you have to do to get ready for the conference?
- Laura: I worked on the Governor's schedule. I was mildly involved in setting up the timeline of it and timeframe of what the outlook would look like, reception ... [crosstalk 00:05:01]
- Ann: Like the opening reception and then the next morning it would be...
- Laura: Then it's the policy stuff. That I don't have a very heavy hand in, the policy stuff. I'm more receptions.
- Ann: The bulk of it was set up by the DGA then?
- Laura: A lot of it. I worked with them a lot, but yeah. We just corresponded and...
- Ann: Were you consulted or did you contribute to the invitation list at all?
- Laura: Yeah.
- Ann: Yeah? These were sponsors or...
- Laura: It's a combination of people that ... Like I said, because it's yearly, there's all ready a set core group of people that join consistently. Then other people ask about it throughout the year and we add them in.
- Ann: These would be people from ... What would they be? From companies or...
- Laura: It's a total variety.
- Ann: Like political people or...
- Laura: I don't know what political people are.
- Ann: I mean office holders [crosstalk 00:06:20]
- Chantell: Aren't we all?
- Laura: Like elected?

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Ann: Yeah.

Laura: The Governors are really the only elected I know. I don't know of any other elected.

Ann: The other people are from companies and things like that?

Laura: Yeah.

Ann: Are these people that have donated in the past to the DGA? Do you know? To campaigns?

Laura: The ones that ... I don't know about campaigns. I have no idea about that. The ones that come consistently, there are different levels of being involved in the DGA. Any of those types of associations where they're annually involved. There's different levels of that.

Ann: How many of these were like considered local? Colorado or regional folks?

Laura: You know what? I don't know.

Chantell: How many people on the invite list are local?

Ann: Yeah.

Laura: I actually don't know that.

Ann: Or if they're like local companies? I saw Sierra Nevada on the list-

Laura: There's definitely some local companies. There is also a strong contingent of out-of-state companies and people.

Ann: Basically, the ones that would contact you and you would add them to the list; they might be more likely to be from Colorado or the region?

Laura: I'm not sure I could say that. I would have to look back at everything and see, because it varies year-to-year.

Ann: Which events were you with the Governor at, both conference and non-conference?

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Laura: With the Governor?

Ann: That you attended the same events that he went to.

Laura: I was at some point at each of the events.

Ann: Okay.

Laura: I didn't stay at some of them for very long. I don't even know if I was at each of the policy stuff. I was in the area, but I wasn't at each of the policy things just because I don't play a role really. Everything else I was there.

Ann: I was taking a look at his schedule. After the opening reception on Friday, July 12, it was blank about what he did after the reception. Do you know what he was doing?

Laura: Friday after the reception he went to a private fundraiser.

Ann: That was something that you had all ready set up?

Laura: I didn't coordinate that, no.

Ann: You didn't?

Laura: No. That was organized by a separate group. I worked with them to coordinate, but that was not ... The money wasn't raised for him or anything like that.

Ann: It was a fundraiser for Hickenlooper's...

Laura: No, it was not.

Ann: For the DGA?

Laura: No. It wasn't for either.

Ann: What was the fundraiser for then?

Chantell: Are you sure it was a fundraiser, or what it just a dinner?

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Laura: Are we talking about on Friday evening?

Ann: Friday, yeah.

Laura: There was this Colorado Democratic Party event.

Ann: Okay.

Laura: It was totally separate.

Ann: Okay.

Chantell: That didn't have anything to do with him or the DGA.

Laura: No.

Ann: He didn't raise funds there or anything like that?

Laura: For Hickenlooper for Colorado? No.

Ann: For the Democratic Party?

Chantell: Were you even with him? [crosstalk 00:09:47]

Laura: I was there, but he ... I don't know what you mean by raising funds for...

Ann: It was a fundraiser; did he raise funds for anyone?

Laura: Like make calls?

Ann: Just [crosstalk 00:10:03].

Chantell: The only thing relevant is DGA, right, and him?

Ann: Right.

Chantell: Really, anything else should be...

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- Ann: Okay, I'm just asking the questions.
- Chantell: Yeah. I just want to make sure we're speaking to what she actually knows personally, from personal knowledge as opposed to speculating about what he may or may not have done, because she wouldn't know. You'd probably have to ask him.
- Ann: Okay, but you were with him at that event?
- Laura: I was at the event. He and I kind of ... We both were roaming and had other things to do, because I'm doing certain things and he's doing other things.
- Ann: The next day was pretty much their breakfast and then the policy stuff and then the luncheon. After the luncheon, it didn't have anything scheduled for him from 1:00 pm until 6:00 pm. That would be on...
- Laura: He actually wanted us [inaudible 00:10:58]. We tried to give him a little down time.
- Ann: He wasn't attending any events?
- Laura: Not that I remember. I don't know ... I'm trying to make sure...
- Ann: I think there was some sort of a brief thing at Aspen Institute at some point.
- Laura: Oh, yeah, we did go over. Thank you for ... See, this is where I forget. He ran over to Aspen Institute and was on ... I think he was on a panel.
- Ann: Otherwise it was just down time for him, huh?
- Laura: Probably. I don't know.
- Ann: You weren't with him?
- Laura: I wasn't with him, no. We did do the Aspen Institute. I totally forgot. That's the problem, these years combine.
- Ann: Did you set up the sponsored dinner at The Little Nell on Saturday?

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Laura: Yes. I worked to coordinate that.

Ann: Do you know how many people were there?

Laura: I think it was ten to twenty-five people.

Ann: Twenty-five?

Laura: Ten to twenty-five.

Ann: Ten to twenty-five.

Laura: I don't remember exactly.

Ann: I think there were five Governors that attended.

Laura: All the Governors try to attend everything that happens at all these DGA-

Ann: The five Governors were among those who were at the sponsored dinner?

Laura: I can't remember exactly which ones were there. Sometimes one or two can't, so I can't say for sure.

Ann: Who else was there?

Laura: Any of the sponsors that were...

Ann: Main sponsors were ... BP I think was one of the main sponsors.

Laura: I don't even know if they were there. Just because someone was a main sponsor doesn't mean that they attended. I would have to go back and look at the RSVP to see exactly who was there. I'm sorry.

Ann: You were there?

Laura: I was there at the very beginning to get things set up.

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Ann: Okay.

Laura: I play a role, just helping people logistically.

Ann: Do you know why that event was closed?

Laura: I'm sorry. Closed?

Ann: Why the sponsored dinner was a closed event.

Laura: What do you mean by closed?

Ann: The conference was open to just about anybody, but the...

Laura: It was only the ... You had to register for the conference.

Ann: Right.

Laura: It wasn't ... The [crosstalk 00:13:29] was closed I guess.

Ann: Like the dinner, you didn't register for. It was like a certain set guest list?

Laura: Yeah. I think it was just ... Everything there's different sponsorship levels and sponsorship ... The DGA has a throughout the year sponsorship stuff. You'd have to ask them about that.

Ann: The people who attended that was by invitation only? It was like certain sponsors, whatever Governors who could attend type of thing. Do you know if Hickenlooper made any remarks at that dinner?

Laura: Yes. He did.

Ann: Were you there to hear those?

Laura: Yes. I was. I left right after.

Ann: Do you remember any sort of highlights from what he had to say?

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- Laura: He just welcomed everyone, thanked them for their weekend. His typical ... He and Governor [inaudible 00:14:26] spoke.
- Ann: You get to do it again in August when I think they have another policy- [inaudible 00:14:36] I don't know. Did Hickenlooper raise money for his own campaign at any point during that weekend?
- Laura: During the DGA activities?
- Ann: The non-conference activities?
- Laura: Hickenlooper for Colorado had a breakfast on Sunday morning. That was completely separate from everything else.
- Ann: Do you know if he raised money for the DGA while he was there?
- Laura: How do you mean?
- Ann: Any of the sponsors ... Did he talk to sponsors and raise money for the DGA?
- Chantell: Talking to sponsors is different than raising money for them.
- Laura: Yeah.
- Ann: Talking to them about contributing or anything like that?
- Laura: As vice chair, which he was last year, his role is to continually help support the DGA.
- Ann: Has he ever gotten contributions from the DGA?
- Laura: No. They cannot.
- Ann: How does that work? I was really confused about that.
- Laura: Do you want to speak to that?
- Chantell: That's a legal issue.

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Ann: Is it a Colorado law?

Chantell: Colorado candidates cannot accept corporate contributions, neither can federal. The DGA being a corporate entity, not profit but corporate, it can't give directly to a candidate. It would just be [crosstalk 00:16:00]

Ann: Thank you for clarifying that. We were looking around, and they've donated to other Governor's campaigns but there's never been anything in regard to Hickenlooper. [crosstalk 00:16:10]. Has there been any sort of in-kind-

Chantell: That would also be a contribution.

Ann: Really? No help with whatever.

Chantell: Any direct help would be a contribution, in-kind or otherwise. That's prohibited.

Ann: Well, he's a nice guy then for raising money for them because he doesn't get anything out of it.

Laura: Good Governors that he can work with are helpful, whoever they are.

Ann: Do you know how much ... Was he was expecting to raise for his campaign during that weekend?

Chantell: I don't know that she can speak about what he expected.

Ann: Do you know what he raised?

Laura: For what?

Ann: During that weekend while he was up there?

Laura: For who?

Ann: For his own campaign.

Laura: For Hickenlooper for Colorado?

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Ann: Yeah.

Laura: I don't know. I know that we didn't receive any contributions from anyone attending the conference.

Ann: Right.

Laura: I don't know if we actually got any that weekend, just to be honest. This wasn't about Hickenlooper for Colorado.

Ann: Did you drive up there with him?

Laura: No. My own car.

Ann: I just wondered if he stopped and did any sort of Governor official duties on the way [crosstalk 00:17:32].

Laura: I have no idea what his schedule was. I don't know.

Ann: I just wondered if he had talked about it or not.

Laura: We don't get much time to talk.

Ann: Really?

Laura: He's busy. He's working hard.

Ann: I think that ought to do it. I think I've gone through everything. I appreciate your time.

Laura: Thank you.

Ann: You bet.

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