

Leveraging a report consisting of “inconclusive accusations” issued by the Office of Congressional Ethics (OCE) – an office created by the democratic controlled Congress, Karen Handel continues to promote a “myth” surrounding Nathan Deal’s business, Gainesville Salvage Disposal. Handel’s attempts to taint Deal’s 30-year career of public service to the people of Georgia is a desperate “witch hunt” and the record needs to be set straight. Here is the Rest of the Story.

Deal owns a partnership in a salvage business, Gainesville Salvage Disposal (GSD), and like many other similar businesses did, partnered with the state of Georgia. This NO MONOPOLY, NO CONTRACT arrangement allowed state inspectors to use their facility 2 days a month to conduct vehicle inspections. These inspections were conducted as a means to ensure that rebuilt vehicles that had previously been deemed “totaled” by insurance companies were safe for resale and road use.

GSD, like other similar businesses, provided their facilities to the state inspectors at NO CHARGE. The owner/applicant requesting the inspection would pay an inspection fee for each car inspected. These fees were the only revenue and profit gained from this arrangement with the State.

Following consolidation of departments under Governor Sonny Perdue, this state inspection program was placed under the Revenue Department, headed by Commissioner Bart Graham. The program became an “after thought”, and Graham indicated it may be terminated. Following Graham’s announcement, the employees of the department; the state inspectors, began contacting Graham in an effort to get clarification about the future of the program. A concerned salvage business owner in Douglasville even posted the commissioner’s office phone number on the Internet and encouraged people to contact him directly. Graham did not respond to these requests for clarification.

Nathan Deal was approached by a number of the state inspectors and other salvage business owners requesting his assistance in gaining information from the commissioner regarding the future of the program. Nathan agreed to assist, and his Congressional Chief of Staff arranged the meeting. Since the purpose of this meeting was to inquire about the future of the program and not intended to discuss any kind of business relationship, Nathan’s staff did not view use of his Congressional e-mail account to be a “conflict of interest”.

At the meeting, Commissioner Graham said he was considering privatizing the program – allowing private companies to re-title these “totaled” cars without a state inspection. Nathan expressed concerns to the commissioner regarding the safety of these vehicles under such a privatized program, since these businesses would have a “profit motive” to simply re-title as many cars as possible. The commissioner went so far as to say that “Safety is not my concern”. In a Congressional interview Commissioner Graham stated that safety had never been taken into account under the program. In a Congressional affidavit, the state’s top official in the program stated that his boss, Commissioner Graham, was wrong and safety had always been a major concern and priority of inspectors. This same state official elected to take early retirement because of the direction Commissioner Graham was taking the program.

Despite the efforts of Nathan, state inspectors, and other salvage business owners, Commissioner Graham removed all funding for the program from the state budget. Nathan stopped all efforts to see the program continued once this decision was made.

Here are some key facts to consider about these accusations:

- It is difficult to argue that Nathan Deal was “bigfooting” state officials as a Congressman, since the commissioner heeded none of Nathan’s concerns or suggestions.
- Under the new privatized program that Commissioner Graham implemented, Nathan and his business partner could have increased revenues significantly by re-titling cars. These revenues would have far exceeded the small amount (less than 10%) of GSD’s revenues generated under the previous inspection program.
- Out of concerns about vehicle safety, Nathan and his business partner dissolved their relationship with the program. It should be noted that under Commissioner Graham’s new program, it is estimated that 18,000 rebuilt cars are put back on Georgia roads each year without proper inspections.

Nathan Deal has 30 years of public service as an elected official without any accusations of misconduct. He authored Georgia’s first ethics law while serving as a State Senator. He has a record of honesty and integrity that has been challenged by “circumstantial evidence”, bolstered by political opponents trying to win this race based on false accusations and innuendo.

**Nathan Deal is the REAL DEAL that Georgia desperately needs as its next Governor.**