

COMMISSIONER OF  
POLITICAL PRACTICES



COPY



STATE OF MONTANA

DENNIS UNSWORTH  
COMMISSIONER  
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HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2401  
[www.politicalpractices.mt.gov](http://www.politicalpractices.mt.gov)

September 1, 2009

Michael Spreadbury  
700 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Hamilton MT 59840

Subject: Campaign finance and practices complaint

Mr. Spreadbury, you recently filed a complaint with this office alleging that Jerry Steele violated Montana campaign finance and practices laws by not placing the appropriate attribution on his campaign signs as required by section 13-35-225, MCA.

Mr. Steele was given an opportunity to respond to the complaint and in an e-mail dated August 26, 2009 stated that he acquired a sticker printed with the appropriate disclaimer and placed it on each of the signs that they had installed throughout the city. Mr. Steele e-mailed a picture of the corrected signs which did include the necessary information required by statute.

My office has traditionally given candidates the benefit of the doubt when they have demonstrated a good faith effort to bring their election materials into compliance. I have determined that under the circumstances, it would not be in the best interests of the state to further investigate this matter; therefore, I am dismissing the complaint.

A letter has been sent to Mr. Steele informing him of this decision and reminding him that he needs to be sure any campaign activity he's involved in meets the requirements in Montana law.

Dennis Unsworth  
Commissioner of Political Practices

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September 1, 2009

Jerry Steele  
223 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Hamilton MT 59840

Subject: Campaign finance and practices complaint

Mr. Steele, recently Michael Spreadbury filed a complaint with this office alleging that you violated Montana campaign finance and practices laws by not placing the appropriate attribution on your campaign signs, as required by section 13-35-225, MCA. A copy of the complaint is enclosed.

Since the complaint was received, I understand you've been in contact with Mary Baker, Program Supervisor for my office. You stated that you had a sticker printed with the appropriate disclaimer information. On August 26, 2009, you e-mailed two pictures of the corrected signs to Mary, which did include the necessary information required by statute.

We generally give candidates the benefit of the doubt when they demonstrate a good faith effort to bring their election material into compliance. I have determined that under the circumstances, it would not be in the best interests of the state to further investigate this matter; therefore, I am dismissing the complaint.

I urge you to make sure any campaign activity you're involved in meets the requirements in Montana law. Mary and the rest of the staff are very helpful if you have questions or need help clarifying the requirements.

Dennis Unsworth  
Commissioner of Political Practices

THE STATE OF MONTANA

COMMISSIONER OF POLITICAL PRACTICES  
1205 Eighth Avenue  
Post Office Box 202401  
Helena, MT 59620-2401  
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POSTMARKED

AUG 18 2009

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

HAND DELIVERED

CERTIFIED MAIL

SIGNED/NOTARIZED

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PRACTICES

### COMPLAINT FORM (07/01)

**TYPE OR PRINT IN INK ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM EXCEPT FOR VERIFICATION SIGNATURE**

**PERSON BRINGING COMPLAINT (COMPLAINANT):**

COMPLETE NAME Michael E. Spreadbury  
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS 700 S. 4th St.  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: WORK \_\_\_\_\_ HOME 363-3877

**PERSON OR ORGANIZATION AGAINST WHOM COMPLAINT IS BROUGHT (RESPONDENT):**

COMPLETE NAME Jerry Steele  
COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS 223 S. 2nd St (City Hall)  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
TELEPHONE NUMBERS: WORK 363-2101 x13 HOME \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE COMPLETE THE SECOND PAGE OF THIS FORM AND DESCRIBE IN DETAIL THE FACTS OF THE ALLEGED VIOLATION.**

VERIFICATION OF THE FACTS OF THE ALLEGED VIOLATION

STATE OF MONTANA, COUNTY OF RAVALLI

I, Michael Spreadbury, being duly sworn, state that the information in this Complaint is complete, true, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.



RUTH ANN HUNTER  
NOTARY PUBLIC-MONTANA  
Residing at Corvallis, Montana  
My Comm. Expires Sept. 18, 2011

[Signature]  
Signature of Complainant

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 18 day of August, 2009.

[Signature]  
Notary Public

My Commission Expires Sept 18, 2011

STATEMENT OF FACTS:

Describe in detail the alleged violation(s) and cite the statute or statutes you believe have been violated. Please attach copies of documentary evidence to support the facts alleged in your statement.

If the space provided below is insufficient, you may attach additional pages as necessary.

I. Campaign signs for municipal election in Hamilton, MT do not have treasurer information printed on front as required by Montana Campaign Practices law. It is believed that the sign is wrap-around and has neither on front or back the required information.

II. Signs were first noticed on August 15, 2009. Ravalli County has a 75 day ordinance prior to election for campaign signs. These signs were first seen and photographed on 8/15/09 which is approximately 81 days from November 3, 2009 the date of the election.

① MONTANA TITLE 13, Elections  
- Sources ② Ravalli Co. elections; Sandy

enclosed: ① photograph of 503 Ravalli St Hamilton  
② NW Cor. 5th St + State St. Hamilton.

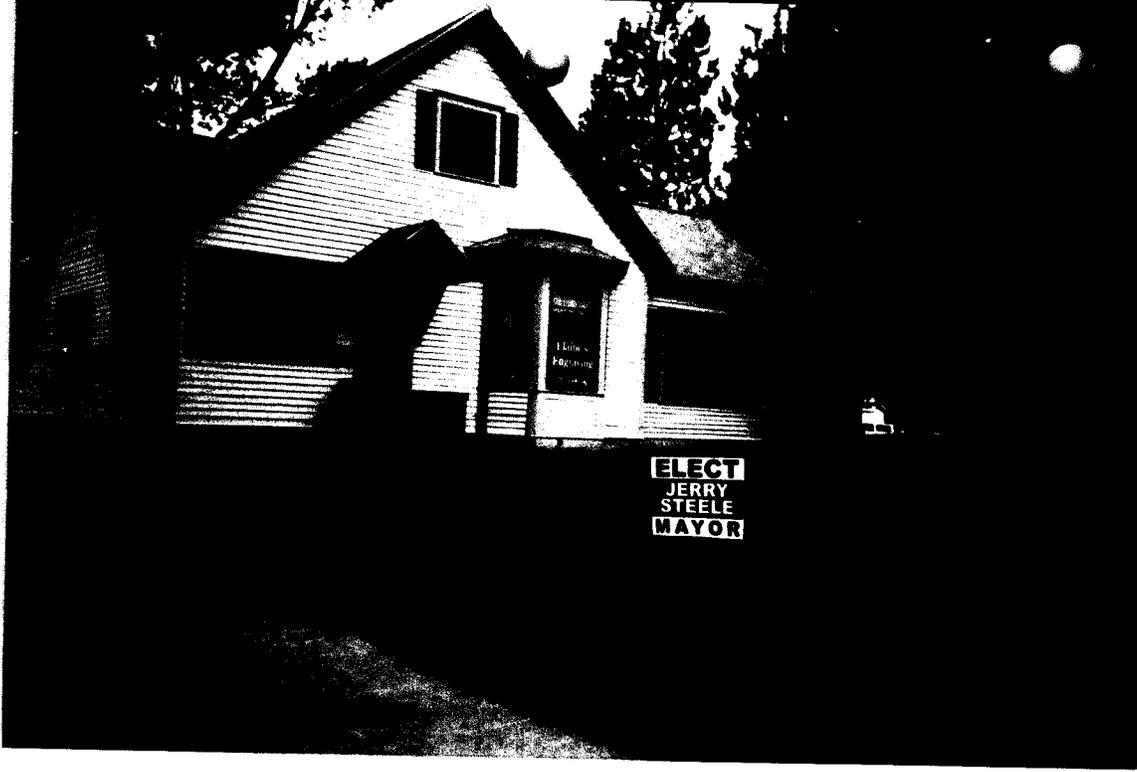
Signs read: ELECT JERRY STEELE MAYOR

TYPE OR PRINT IN INK ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM EXCEPT FOR  
VERIFICATION SIGNATURE

COMPLAINTS MUST BE:

- SIGNED
- NOTARIZED
- DELIVERED IN PERSON OR BY CERTIFIED MAIL





## **Baker, Mary**

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**From:** Michael Spreadbury [mspread@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2009 9:24 AM  
**To:** Baker, Mary  
**Subject:** Hamilton complaint

Mary,

You asked me to write back about this time about the campaign signs in Hamilton for Jerry Steele. The signs came back up today with a very small sticker at the right of the Jerry Steele part in black with a 1" x 1" sticker. I could see some indistinct words there when passing by these signs, but the campaign rules say "prominent".

If I am within a foot or two of these signs, and cannot see "paid for by..." I am assuming that this is not prominently displayed.

My viewpoint is that if his campaign wants to go with this, it will only look poorly on them when a proper sign is displayed. I wish to continue the complaint as written and submitted in writing and on file in your office.

Thank you.

**Michael Spreadbury**

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**Baker, Mary**

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**From:** Michael Spreadbury [mspread@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 19, 2009 1:46 PM  
**To:** Baker, Mary  
**Subject:** amend complaint  
**Attachments:** CDViewer; 20310017.jpg; 20310019.jpg

Dear Mary,

according to MCA 13-35-225 a political sign for municipal office must reveal the source of the payment of the sign. The campaign signs for Jerry Steele, Mayor race of Hamilton do not have the "disclaimer".

Photos of these signs are attached to this email, and are in the complaint.

With receipt of my complaint, I elected for an informal call to the opponent. I will follow up in one week to inform you of compliance. If no compliance is met, please continue with the formal complaint.

Thank you,

**Michael Spreadbury**

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