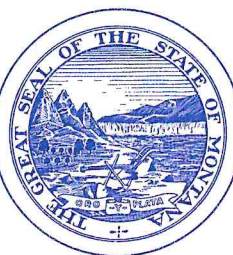


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

CHRIS J. GALLUS
COMMISSIONER
TELEPHONE (406) 444-2942
FAX (406) 444-1643

1209 EIGHTH AVENUE
PO BOX 202401
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2401
www.politicalpractices.mt.gov

May 1, 2026

Anne Brust
1117 Carlos Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404

Subject: Complaint received April 29, 2026; *Brust v. Valentine*, COPP-2026-CFP-006

Anne,

This letter acknowledges receipt of the formal Campaign Finance and Practices (CFP) Complaint you submitted, originally submitted to this office on April 27, 2026. The complaint alleges violations of Montana election law under my jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices, and otherwise conforms to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Consequently, I will accept the complaint as filed.

Pursuant to the established process, a letter and copy of the complaint will be sent to the named respondent or their representative/s, requesting that they provide a written response to this office and retain pertinent records pending further investigation of this matter. Mont. Code Ann. (MCA) § 13-37-132.

I will review any additional materials relevant to this complaint for any deficiencies pursuant to 44.11.106 ARM, law, and prior relevant COPP rulings, and reserve the right to dismiss the complaint upon this initial inquiry. If this occurs, I will notify you and provide a basis for the dismissal.

As to alleged violations of MCA § 2-2-122, I must dismiss this portion of the complaint. That statute is part of Montana's established Code of Ethics, and as Commissioner my authority over the Code is limited to judicial officers, state officers, legislators and state employees, pursuant to MCA § 2-2-136.¹ Jurisdiction over the Code of Ethics as it applies to public officers or employees of a local government is provided to local authorities, either a local government review panel if one has been established or, if not, the county attorney of the county in which the local government is located, pursuant to MCA § 2-2-144. Montana's Code of Ethics may be found in full in MCA Title 2, chapter 2, part 1.

As to the remaining allegations, upon further review I will determine either a dismissal or a formal investigation is warranted. MCA § 13-37-111. Following the completion of an investigation, a summary of facts and statement of findings will be prepared, and a copy will be sent to you. This generally involves a more extensive and time-consuming process, during which you may contact us for a status update. If violations are found to have occurred and prosecution is determined to be justified, this matter will be referred to the local county attorney. MCA § 13-35-124. The local county attorney then determines whether they will prosecute the matter or refer it back to me. If returned to me, I will either work with the responding party to settle the matter or prosecute it within their local jurisdiction in district court. MCA § 13-35-128.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris J. Gallus".

Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices

¹ See also *Sheehy v. Commissioner of Political Practices for State*, 2020 MT 37, ¶ 24.