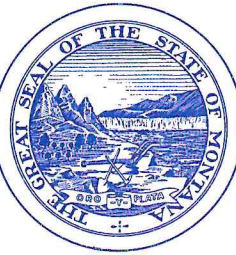


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



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

September 9, 2024

Jake Eaton
PO Box 81274
Billings, MT 59108

Subject: Complaint received September 5, 2024; *Eaton v. American Civil Liberties Union, Inc.*, COPP-2024-CFP-033

Jake,

This letter acknowledges receipt of the formal Campaign Finance and Practices (CFP) Complaint you submitted, received by this office on September 5, 2024. While the specific statute you allege has been violated is listed as Montana Code Annotated (MCA) § 13-37-223, you have verified that the alleged violation is in fact MCA § 13-35-225. The signed and sworn complaint does appear to allege a potential violation of Montana election law under my jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices. It also appears to conform to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Consequently, I will accept it as filed.

Pursuant to the established process, a letter and copy of the complaint is being sent to the named respondent, requesting that they provide a written response to this office and retain pertinent records pending further investigation of this matter.

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. Alternatively, upon this further review, I may determine that a formal investigation is warranted. If an investigation is conducted, 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 determined during this process, they are typically referred to the local county attorney. 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.

Regards,

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

Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices