

October 8, 2024

Chris J. Gallus, Commissioner
1209 Eight Avenue
PO Box 202401
Helena, MT 59620-2401

RE: Leas v. Repke, COPP-2024-CFP-040

Dear Commissioner Gallus:

This is my official response to your letter referencing Leas v. Repke, COPP-2024-CFP-040, which I received on October 7, 2024.

First, it has never been at any point my intention to provide incomplete information to Montana's voters during the 2024 election cycle. I'm proud to be both a Democrat and a candidate to serve as Montana's next State Auditor. All my campaign material and online content identifies me as a Democrat. I've participated in dozens of Montana Democratic Party sponsored events. I've participated in non-partisan events as well, at times with my opponent, while noting for people that I am a registered Democratic candidate. The implication from Mr. Leas that anything else is the case is disingenuous.

As you advise in your letter, there are instances in which a "D" or some other word or symbol must be included in a candidate's paid advertising. Upon receipt of your letter, I have taken the following steps to update my materials:

1. I'm working with Lamar Outdoor advertising, which placed the billboards, to have a D inserted onto all billboards that are standing, and I have asked Lamar to send me pictures of the billboards with the changes. I will provide those pictures to you when Lamar sends them to me. Lamar updated the digital billboards yesterday, the day I received your letter.
2. The Facebook site upon which the pictures of the billboards are featured clearly identifies me as a Democrat. Until the billboards are updated, I've taken down the pictures.
3. I have ceased distribution of all yard signs that do not have a D in the "Paid for by" on the bottom of the signs. Since my campaign did not place all the yard signs in yards, it is simply not possible for me to add the "D" to all that are displayed.
4. Also, I have confirmed that the "paid for by" disclaimer is accurate in the videos promoting my candidacy.

As noted in your letter, I remain compliant with MCA § 45-7-207.

I will provide updates when Lamar Advertising sends the pictures referenced earlier in this letter.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



John Repke

Commissioner of
Political Practices
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