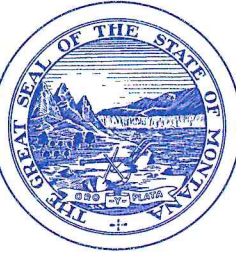


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

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COMMISSIONER
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May 3, 2023

Free to Learn Action

Subject: Complaint received May 3, 2023; *Bronson v. Free to Learn Action*, COPP-2023-CFP-006

The enclosed complaint alleges a violation of Montana's campaign reporting and disclosure laws. The complaint is accepted as conforming to the requirements of 44.11.106 ARM, the administrative rule regarding campaign complaints.

Upon review, I have determined that the allegation that certain material failed to include the 'paid for by' attribution message is merited, as the specific communication mentioned in this complaint does not include required attribution, Mont. Code Ann. §13-35-225(1). Please provide COPP full 'paid for by' attribution messaging for this communication, including the full name of the committee, committee address, and committee Treasurer or other officer information. COPP would also request you provide the total number of messages sent by the committee in Montana, and the date or dates such messages were sent. Please provide this attribution information to COPP on or before 5:00 PM Monday, May 8, 2023.

As part of its Investigation into this matter, COPP also requires information pertaining to the number of election material/s financed and distributed by Free to Learn Action in the State of Montana, the date or dates such material/s were publicly distributed, and the total cost. Please include receipts, invoices, or similar documentation as provided from the vendor/s pertaining to all State of Montana election material/s. Please provide this information to COPP no later than 5:00 PM Monday, May 15, 2023.

This office is now conducting a legal review, and an investigation of records currently in your possession is subject to a pending investigation. While I do not anticipate that you would intentionally destroy any relevant records, due to the severity of the penalty I feel compelled to provide you with the relevant statute in this regard. See, Attached Mont. Code Ann. §45-7-207 (Tampering with or fabricating physical evidence). This Office may need to review

documents connected to any Montana election activity financed by Free to Learn Action. Accordingly, Mont. Code Ann. §13-37-111 authorizes the Commissioner to inspect records, accounts, and books held by a candidate or political committee, administer oaths and affirmations, subpoena witnesses and compel their attendance, take evidence, and require the production of any books, papers and records that are relevant or material for the purpose of conducting an investigation.

To facilitate such an investigation, please take immediate steps to retain all such records, and begin collecting and preparing records for review. This includes documents, including computer communications (e.g. email), in your possession or the possession of any of your agents, representatives, or assigns. Communications with attorneys should be retained even these records might need to be produced if attorney/client privilege is not involved. As indicated, your preservation of all such documents is essential and required pursuant to this request and subject to penalties provided in Mont. Code Ann. §45-7-207 (attached).

If you did not engage in the activity relating to this complaint, I would appreciate having any additional information you can provide as to potential parties involved. It is in everyone's best interest to immediately resolve the situation, and COPP will work with you, or other parties, to get this accomplished.

Thank you for your immediate attention and consideration of this urgent matter.

Regards,



Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices