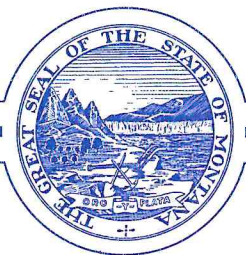


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

CHRIS J. GALLUS
COMMISSIONER
TELEPHONE (406) 444-2942
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May 7, 2024

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

Ted Kronebusch
608 Delaware St.
Conrad, MT 59425

Subject: Complaint received May 2, 2024; *Kronebusch v. Coombs*, COPP-2024-CFP-014

Ted,

This letter acknowledges the receipt of your formal complaint, received by this office on May 2, 2024. Your signed and sworn complaint alleges a violation of Montana election law under my jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices, and also appears to conform to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Therefore, I will accept it as filed.

While I am accepting the submitted complaint, I will not consider the alleged violation that certain campaign materials financed by respondent Coombs failed to include an appropriate "paid for by" attribution statement. As pictured in the submitted complaint, each referenced material contains an attribution that specifically and obviously includes the words "paid for by", respondent Coombs's last name, and respondent Coombs's campaign address. As each of the required elements under MCA § 13-35-225(1)(a) are included, I must reject the assertion of an improper attribution statement being placed on campaign materials.

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. This generally involves a more extensive and time-consuming process, during which you may contact us for a status update.

If an investigation is conducted, a decision will be issued which includes a summary of facts and determines if those facts are sufficient or insufficient to support a violation. This decision will also determine if prosecution is justified. Upon completion of this investigation a copy of the decision will be sent to you and posted on COPP's website.

If I determine prosecution is justified, this matter will be referred to the county attorney in the county where the violations occurred. The county attorney will then determine 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