

Commissioner of Political Practices
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Commissioner of Political Practices
2024 SEP 07 PM 07

Campaign Finance and Practices

Complaint Form (08/17)

Type or print in ink all information on this form except for verification signature

Person bringing complaint (Complainant):

Complete Name Ed LESTER
Complete Mailing Address 3032 EDWARDS ST.
BUTTE MT 59701
Phone Numbers: Work 406-497-1121 Home 406-490-8366

Person or organization against whom complaint is brought (Respondent):

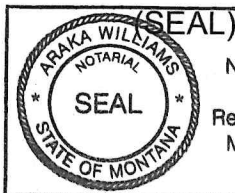
Complete Name MICHAEL R. GAGE
Complete Mailing Address 1010 BEEF TRAIL Rd
BUTTE MT 59701
Phone Numbers: Work 406-491-4838 Home SAME

Please complete the second page of this form and describe in detail the facts of the alleged violation.

Verification by oath or affirmation

State of Montana, County of SILVER BOW

I, Ed LESTER, being duly sworn, state that the information in this Complaint is complete, true, and correct, to the best of my knowledge and belief.



ARAKA WILLIAMS
NOTARY PUBLIC for the
State of Montana
Residing at Butte, Montana
My Commission Expires
May 30, 2027

[Signature]
Signature of Complainant

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 6 day of September, 2024.

[Signature]
Notary Public

My Commission Expires:

Statement of facts:

Describe in detail the alleged violation(s) and cite the statute or statutes you believe have been violated. Please attach copies of documentary evidence to support the facts alleged in your statement.

If the space provided below is insufficient, you may attach additional pages as necessary.

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PAGES (2).

Complaints must be:

- signed
- notarized
- delivered in person or by mail.

Dear Montana Commissioner of Political Practices:

My name is Ed Lester. I am the current sheriff in Butte-Silver Bow. I am running for re-election.

My opponent (Mike Gage) has been, and still is, running radio advertising for his campaign. The advertising began well before the primary election in June I recorded the 60 second ad as it played on 8/23/24 at 8:16 AM on local radio station KAAR 92.5 FM. The audio file can be sent to your office via email.

The ad has also been playing on KMBR 95.5 in Butte.

92.5 KAAR and 95.5 KMBR are Butte radio stations run by Townsquare Media. The company address is:

750 Dewey Blvd., Butte MT, 59701. Phone: 406-494-4442.

A local security company is paying for the ads. The company is Immanuel Security LLC. The ad begins with a narrative by the candidate, Mike Gage, then a statement from a representative of the company (Kane Fischer) endorsing the candidate, and finally, the disclosure that the ad is paid for by Immanuel Security.

Immanuel Security is a local security company located at:

3271 Seven Springs Road

Butte MT 59750

Phone: 406-479-4131

Mike Gage and Immanuel security (Kane Fischer) are clearly operating in coordination to create the political advertising, as they both speak in the same 1 minute radio spot.

I do not believe an LLC can contribute to, and coordinate with, a political candidate for the purpose of campaign advertising.

Coordination clearly exists between the candidate and the company.

That is a question for your interpretation.

If it is legal, I believe it would have to be reported as a campaign contribution and would be limited to \$450 per election.

Mike Gage has filed the following financial reports in the CERS system.

- 1. Due 3/20/24-filed late (4/2/24)**

2. Due 4/20/24-filed late (4/29/24)
3. Due 5/20/24-filed late (5/29/24)
4. Due 6/20/24-filed late (6/24/24)
5. Due 8/20/24-filed on time (8/15/24)

None of these reports list any campaign expenditure for radio advertising or any campaign contribution from either Kane Fischer or Immanuel Security.

There are virtually no expenses of any kind listed in any of the reports from the Gage campaign. In addition 4 of the 5 financial reports were filed late, after the deadline for the filing period.

Due to the period of time the ads have been running on these radio stations, I believe Immanuel Security has contributed thousands of dollars to the Gage campaign via payment for the radio ads, which is well in excess of the legally allowed contribution limit. Despite the disclaimer on the radio ad, none of the contributions have been reported as campaign expenditures or contributions as required by law.

I have been reluctant to file a complaint. But, I waited until the latest filing period (5th report) in hopes my opponent would make some effort to come into compliance. However, 80% of his financial reports have been late and he reports virtually no expenditures including the radio ads. It does not appear these omissions are an honest mistake. Rather, it appears he has no intention or desire to comply with Montana Law.

I am left with no option but to request that you investigate this matter as a violation of campaign finance law.

**I can be reached at this email, by cell phone at [406-490-8366](tel:406-490-8366), or by mail at:
3032 Edwards Street
Butte MT 59701**

Thank you for your time.


Ed Lester