

## **SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

Re: Falagan v. Bennett, COPP-2024-CFP-010

This Settlement Agreement (Agreement), is entered into by Patrick M. Risken, in his official capacity as the Deputy Commissioner of Political Practices (Commissioner) and Lisa Bennett (Respondent), an individual and candidate for election to the Montana House of Representatives for HD55, during the 2024 election period.

Montana law authorizes the Commissioner to file an action in the district court in order to seek a civil penalty for violation of Montana's campaign finance and practices laws and rules, Mont. Code Ann. (MCA) Secs. 13-37-124 and 128. In order to avoid litigation, the Commissioner and the Respondent enter into this Agreement to completely and finally resolve this matter.

1. The Commissioner acknowledges that a Campaign Finance and Practices Complaint was filed with the Commissioner by a private citizen on April 29, 2024, contending the Respondent violated Montana's campaign finance and practices laws.
2. On May 8, 2024, the Commissioner issued a Declaration of Merits of Complaint and Findings of Facts Sufficient to Support Violations in Commissioner's cause number COPP-2024-CFP-010, the "Decision." The Decision determined the Respondent failed to comply with certain campaign finance and practices laws and administrative regulations, specifically MCA § 13-35-225, regarding required attribution on campaign materials.
3. The Respondent acknowledges that she has read and understands the Decision, acknowledges that the facts contained therein are accurate, and that the findings are based in law.
4. The Commissioner and the Respondent agree that neither the execution of this Agreement nor compliance with its terms shall constitute an admission of wrongdoing on the part of the Respondent.
5. As a consequence of finding violations of Montana's Campaign Finance and Practices laws and a determination that prosecution was justified, the Commissioner referred this matter to the Carbon County Attorney as required by MCA §§ 13-37-124 and 125. The Carbon County Attorney thereafter referred this matter back to the Commissioner for prosecution, which makes the matter appropriate for civil action or settlement.
6. The Commissioner and the Respondent agree that execution of this Agreement by both parties, and the payment of a civil fine by the Respondent, fully resolves all of the issues set forth in the Decision.

7. The civil fine is payable as follows: the Respondent agrees to pay the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) as a civil fine which COPP shall remit to the State General Fund.

8. This executed Agreement and the payment of a civil fine in the amount of \$100.00 by the Respondent fully and finally resolves all the issues as set forth in the Decision but is not to be construed or presented as an admission of any wrongdoing by the Respondent.

9. Simultaneously with the return of the executed Agreement, the Respondent will remit to the Commissioner a check in the amount of \$100.00 made out to "Commissioner of Political Practices" and delivered to the Office of the Commissioner of Political Practices, 1209 - 8th Ave., P.O. Box 202401, Helena, Montana 59620.

10. The executed Agreement and payment of the fine as described above will be remitted to the Office of the Commissioner of Political Practices on or before May 28, 2025.

11. In consideration of payment of the civil fine as required in Sections 7 through 10 of this Agreement, the Commissioner agrees not to pursue any further proceedings against the Respondent based on the matters addressed in the Decision and in this Agreement.

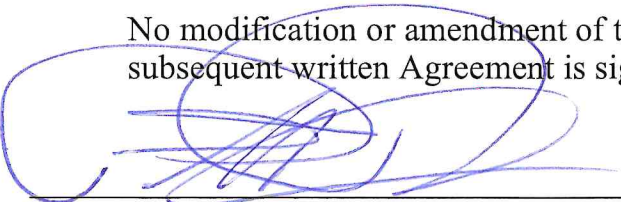
12. The Respondent enters into this Agreement to avoid litigation and to resolve and settle this dispute with the Commissioner. It is understood and agreed that the payment of the civil fine as described in Sections 7 through 11 of this Agreement, and execution of this Agreement by the Respondent, is accepted as the sole consideration for full satisfaction and compromise of what may be disputed claims.

13. The parties fully and forever release and discharge each other and their respective employees, successors, assigns, agents, ostensible agents, attorneys and representatives from any and all actions, claims, causes of action, demands, expenses, damages or injuries, whether asserted or unasserted, known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, arising out of the matters investigated by the Commissioner and summarized in the Decision and in this Agreement.

14. The parties agree that the executed Agreement is a public document and will be posted on COPP's website and otherwise made available to members of the public.

15. This document, consisting of three (3) pages and after execution by the parties, sets forth the entire Agreement between the Commissioner and the Respondent.


No modification or amendment of this Agreement will be effective unless a subsequent written Agreement is signed by both parties.



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Patrick M Risken  
Deputy Commissioner of Political Practices

09/02/25  
Date



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Lisa Bennett

8/26/25  
Date