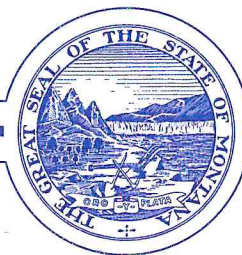


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

CHRIS J. GALLUS
COMMISSIONER
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May 11, 2026

Albert Bennett
110 Barlow Creek
Red Lodge, MT 59068

Subject: Complaint received May 1, 2026; Bennett v. Roascio, COPP-2026-CFP-013

Albert,

This letter acknowledges receipt of the formal Campaign Finance and Practices (CFP) Complaint you submitted, originally received by this office on May 1, 2026. The complaint alleges violations of Montana election law under my jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices, and otherwise conforms to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Consequently, I will accept the complaint as filed.

Pursuant to the established process, a letter and copy of the complaint will be sent to the named respondent or their representative/s, requesting that they provide a written response to this office and retain pertinent records pending further investigation of this matter. Mont. Code Ann. (MCA) § 13-37-132.

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. MCA § 13-35-111. If an investigation is conducted, a summary of facts and statement of findings will be prepared, and a copy will be sent to you. This generally involves a more extensive and time-consuming process, during which you may contact us for a status update. If violations are found to have occurred and prosecution is determined to be justified, this matter will be referred to the local county attorney. MCA § 13-35-124. The local county attorney then determines 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. MCA § 13-35-128.

In closing I wish to disclose that prior to my appointment as commissioner, while in private practice, I represented the complainant's spouse against the named respondents in this matter. While I do not conclude that this prior legal representation results in recusal per MCA § 13-37-111(3), I did want to notify each of the parties of the relationship and provide each an opportunity to request a recusal. If you would like to request my recusal from this matter, please do so no later than May 18, 2026 and include any information you feel is pertinent to my decision.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris J. Gallus".

Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices