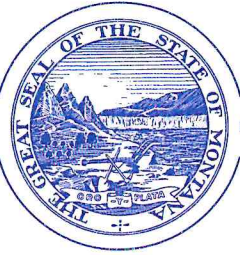


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

CHRIS J. GALLUS
COMMISSIONER
TELEPHONE (406) 444-2942
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1209 EIGHTH AVENUE
PO BOX 202401
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2401
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February 23, 2024

Charlotte Ann Sainz
PO Box 84
Ryegate, MT 59074

Subject: Complaint received January 10, 2024; *Sainz v. Wirsching*, COPP-2024-CFP-001

Charlotte,

This letter acknowledges the receipt of your formal complaint, received by this Office via U.S. Mail on January 10, 2024. Your signed and sworn complaint details an alleged violation of Montana election law potentially falling under Montana Code Annotated (MCA) Title 13, Chapter 35, over which I maintain proper jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices. The complaint also appears to conform to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Therefore, I will accept it as filed. As this alleged violation falls under Montana election law, I am accepting the complaint as a Campaign Finance and Practices (CFP) complaint.

My authority as Montana's Commissioner of Political Practices "COPP" is limited to Montana's Code of Ethics in specific situations outlined under Montana Code Annotated "MCA" Title 2, Chapter 2 and Administrative Rules of Montana "ARM" Rule Chapter 44.10; lobbying law outlined in MCA Title 5, Chapter 7 and ARM Rule Chapter 44.12; and election law as outlined under MCA Title 13, Chapters 35 and 37 and ARM Rule Chapter 44.11.

Please note that while your complaint presents various allegations relating to obtaining and maintaining a Post Office Box in Golden Valley County and associated actions or activities, I am not provided proper jurisdiction to consider those claims. My jurisdiction in this matter is limited to your claim that the respondent obtained a "Fraudulently issued Voter ID card," as such an action is covered under Montana election law in MCA Title 13, Chapter 35. Consequently, this is the only allegation in your complaint that I am able to address.

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, as noted above, I may determine an 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,



Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices