



FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION

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April 13, 2012

Via US Mail

Jennie Skelton, Esq.
Nielsen, Merksamer, Parrinello, Gross & Leoni, LLP
o/b/o Jake Ours, Ours for City Council 2010, and Janet Condron
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REDACTED

Re: **Jake Ours, Ours for City Council 2010, and Janet Condron; FPPC No. 11/181**

Dear Ms. Skelton:

The Fair Political Practices Commission (“Commission”) enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”)¹. As you are aware, the Commission received a complaint against your clients, Jake Ours, a candidate for Santa Rosa City Council in the November 2, 2010 election, Ours for City Council 2010 (“Committee”), and Janet Condron, the treasurer for the Committee, alleging that Mr. Ours and the Committee sent out at least two mailers in which Jake Ours, Mr. Bartley and Juan Hernandez were all featured, but failed to appropriately disclose the expenditures. The Commission has decided to close this case with this warning letter.

The Commission has completed its investigation into the facts of this case. Specifically, the Commission’s Enforcement Division (“Enforcement Division”) found that Mr. Ours reported on his 10/1/10 through 10/16/10 pre-election campaign statement that he paid \$3,852 to Chroma Graphics. This expenditure was not disclosed as apportioned between the candidates. However, we have determined that all three candidates agreed to pay one third of these mailers, but failed to properly disclose the apportioned cost of the mailers. Mr. Ours, the Committee and Ms. Condron filed an amendment, disclosing the apportioned cost of the mailers. Additionally, on or about February 23, 2012, Mr. Ours, the Committee and Ms. Condron amended the semi-annual campaign statement for the period 1/1/11 through 6/30/11, disclosing that they received reimbursement for the accrued expense from the Bartley for City Council 2010 committee.

¹ The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code sections 81000 through 91014. All statutory references are to the Government Code, unless otherwise indicated. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in Sections 18110 through 18997 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations. All regulatory references are to Title 2, Division 6 of the California Code of Regulations, unless otherwise indicated.

The failure to disclose and itemize expenditures and accrued expenses in campaign statements are violations of the Act. (Government Code sections 84211, subdivisions (b)(i) and (k).) In the opinion *In the matter of John St. Croix*, 18 FPPC Ops. 1, the Commission advised that three candidates are permitted to combine their funds to finance a mailing. If three candidates split the cost of a mailer proportionately, no contribution resulted. In order for there to be no contribution, each candidate would have to pay full and adequate consideration for his or her portion of the mailer. However, we are closing this matter with a warning letter, based, in part, on the facts that Mr. Bartley, Mr. Ours and Mr. Hernandez agreed to split the cost of the mailers, have no history with the Enforcement Division, Mr. Ours amended the campaign statements disclosing the accrued expenses prior to contact from the Enforcement Division, paid the respective committees the outstanding balance and filed an amendment disclosing the cost of the accrued expenses were paid.

This letter serves as a written warning. The information in this matter will be retained and may be considered should an enforcement action become necessary based on newly discovered information or future conduct. Failure to comply with the provisions of the Act in the future will result in monetary penalties of up to \$5,000 for each violation.

A warning letter is an FPPC case resolution without administrative prosecution or fine. However, the warning letter resolution does not provide your clients with the opportunity for a probable cause hearing or hearing before an Administrative Law Judge or the Fair Political Practices Commission. If your clients wish to avail themselves of these proceedings by requesting that this case proceed with prosecution rather than a warning, please notify us within ten (10) days from the date of this letter. Upon this notification, the FPPC will rescind this warning letter and proceed with administrative prosecution of this case. If we do not receive such notification, this warning letter will be posted on the FPPC's website ten (10) days from the date of this letter.

The Commission publishes forms and manuals to facilitate compliance with the provisions of the Act. If you need forms or manuals, or guidance regarding your obligations, please call the Commission's Technical Assistance Division at 1-866-275-3772. Please also visit our website at www.fppc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

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Bridgette Castillo
Commission Counsel
Enforcement Division