



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3050 • Sacramento, CA 95811

September 11, 2023

Christopher Rodriguez
O/b/o Rodriguez, Rodriguez for Mayor 2022, and Sarah Rodriguez
[REDACTED]

John Mullen
Attorney for City of Oceanside
Via email: JMullen@oceansideca.org

Re: Warning Letter: FPPC No. 2019-01647, In the Matter of Christopher Rodriguez, Rodriguez for Mayor 2020, and Sarah Rodriguez

Dear all,

The Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”).¹ The Enforcement Division received numerous sworn complaints against Christopher Rodriguez (“Rodriguez”), in the capacity of a member of the Oceanside City Council, the candidate-controlled committee Rodriguez for Mayor 2022 (“Committee”), and treasurer for the candidate-controlled committee, Sarah Rodriguez. The complaints alleged a potential conflict of interest, failure to comply with campaign reporting provisions, personal use of campaign funds, failure to disclose reportable interests on Statements of Economic Interests (“SEI”), and failure to include reportable information on campaign statements.

The Enforcement Division has completed its investigation of the facts in this case. Specifically, the Enforcement Division found that Rodriguez failed to disclose a business position on a family farm called Puerta De Lomas Exotic Fruits. In addition, Rodriguez failed to disclose personal loans made to Rodriguez and an LLC and trust. The Committee, Rodriguez, and Sarah Rodriguez failed to disclose the responsible officer information for contributions received from LLC; however, amendments were filed immediately after Enforcement contact.

No public official at any level of state or local government may make, participate in making, or in any way attempt to use their official position to influence a governmental decision in which the official knows or has reason to know they have a financial interest.² A public official has a financial interest in a decision if it is reasonably foreseeable that the decision will have a material financial effect on the official, the official’s immediate family, or on the official’s financial interest or interests.³

¹ The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code §§ 81000 through 91014, and all statutory references are to this code. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in §§ 18104 through 18998 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and all regulatory references are to this source.

² Section 87100.

³ Section 87103.

With respect to the conflict-of-interest allegations, the Enforcement Division found insufficient evidence to prove a conflict. Therefore, the Enforcement Division closes this matter with this letter of no finding.

Under the Act, a member of a city council is required to periodically disclose certain economic interests, including income, loans, investments, gifts, and any business position, including any position of management with a business that has an interest in real property in the jurisdiction or does business or plans to do business in the jurisdiction or has done business in the jurisdiction at any time during the two years before the date the statement is required to be filed.⁴ The Act requires recipient committees, including a candidate-controlled committee, to disclose the responsible officer of an LLC that makes contributions to the committee.⁵

The Enforcement Division found that Rodriguez had a duty to file campaign statements and fully disclose all reportable interests. Rodriguez failed to timely report a business position with a family farm and failed to report a personal loan on Statements of Economic Interest (SEIs). In addition, Rodriguez, the Committee, and Sarah Rodriguez failed to report required information on campaign statements. During the 2020 election cycle, Rodriguez's candidate-controlled committee received multiple contributions from LLCs but failed to include the responsible officer information.

With respect to the finding of violations, the Enforcement Division has determined that mitigating circumstances exist here. Amendments for the Statements of Economic Interest and the campaign statements were filed immediately after Enforcement contact. In addition, Rodriguez is no longer in public office and the Committee has terminated. In addition, Rodriguez, the Committee, and Sarah Rodriguez have no prior history of enforcement actions. Based on the foregoing, and in accordance with the Enforcement Division Policy Directives formally adopted by the Commission on January 26, 2023, which requires the Enforcement Division to take all appropriate actions within their discretion to decrease the Division's annual carryover caseload, the Enforcement Division is closing this case with this warning letter.⁶ Discretion was used based upon mitigating or aggravating circumstances and the totality of the circumstances.⁷ Additionally, discretion was used for violations that caused minimal public harm when lack of experience or knowledge of the Act's requirements caused multiple violations with minimal public harm that were corrected upon contact.⁸ This resolution may not be used as a comparable case for other enforcement matters.⁹

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.

⁴ See Sections 87200, 87206, 87207, and 87209.

⁵ Regulation 18421.10.

⁶ <https://www.fppc.ca.gov/content/dam/fppc/NS-Documents/AgendaDocuments/General%20Items/2023/january/15.0-Enforcement-directives.pdf>

⁷ Regulations 18360.1 and 18360.3.

⁸ Regulation 18360.2.

⁹ See Regulation 18361.5, subdivision (e)(3).

A warning letter is an Enforcement Division case resolution without administrative prosecution or fine. The Commission has adopted Regulation 18360.1 to authorize the Enforcement Division to issue warning letters to conclude cases in specified circumstances. However, the warning letter resolution does not provide you with the opportunity for a probable cause hearing or hearing before an Administrative Law Judge or the Commission. If you wish to avail yourself of these proceedings by requesting that your 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 Enforcement Division 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 Commission's website ten (10) days from the date of this letter.

Please feel free to contact me at 916-323-6421 (voicemail) or tgilbertson@fppc.ca.gov with any questions you may have regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theresa Gilbertson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Theresa Gilbertson
Senior Commission Counsel
Enforcement Division

CC: Yvonne Obrite, Sworn Complainant
Joe Hill, Sworn Complainant