



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION
1102 Q Street • Suite 3000 • Sacramento, CA 95811

September 18, 2023

Hilton W. Smith for Imperial County Sheriff 2022
Hilton W. Smith, Candidate
Raul Urena, Treasurer



Warning Letter Re: FPPC No. 2023-00618; Hilton W. Smith for Imperial County Sheriff 2022; Hilton W. Smith; Raul Urena

Dear Mr. Smith, Mr. Urena, & Hilton W. Smith for Imperial County Sheriff 2022,

The Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”).¹ As you are aware, in response to the Enforcement Division’s pre-election outreach program, we were made aware by the Imperial County Clerk that you failed to timely file a pre-election campaign statement in connection with the June 7, 2022 election. The Enforcement Division has completed its review of the facts in this case. Specifically, we found that you failed to timely file the first and second pre-election campaign statements (Form 460).

The Act requires candidate-controlled committees to file two pre-election campaign statements at specified times prior to the election in which the candidate will be on the ballot, as well as semi-annual campaign statements each year no later than July 31 for the period ending June 30, and no later than January 31 for the period ending December 31.² The obligation to file semi-annual campaign statements continues until the candidate or treasurer terminates the committee.

Your actions violated the Act because you failed to timely file the first pre-election campaign statement for the period covering January 1, 2022 through April 23, 2022 by the April 28, 2022 deadline, and the second pre-election campaign statement for the period covering April 24, 2022 through May 21, 2022 by the May 26, 2022 deadline. But, for the following reasons, the Enforcement Division has decided to close this case with this warning letter rather than a fine: You

¹ The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code sections 81000 through 91014, and all statutory references are to this code. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in Sections 18110 through 18997 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and all regulatory references are to this source.

² Sections 84200.5 and 84200.

were referred as part of the proactive pre-election program; you filed a campaign statement that covered January 1, 2022 through June 1, 2022 immediately after you were contacted by the Enforcement Division and prior to the June 7, 2022 primary election; you have since amended the campaign statements to reflect the correct first and second pre-election reporting periods and semi-annual reporting period; you were unsuccessful in your election; the Committee is terminated; and you have no history of violating these sections of the Act. Please note that while the Enforcement Division is closing this matter without a fine, your filing officer may assess late filing penalties.

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 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 Ginny Brown at gbrown@fppc.ca.gov or 916-322-8064 with any questions you may have regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Christopher B. Burton

Christopher B. Burton, Assistant Chief
Enforcement Division

CBB:gab