



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

July 7, 2023

Pardo for Judge 2022

Oscar Pardo

Tishia Merlo, Treasurer

Via email: opardo@sonomacourt.org

Warning Letter re: FPPC No. 2022-00440; Pardo for Judge 2022, Pardo, Merlo

Dear Committee, Oscar Pardo, and Tishia Merlo:

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 County of Sonoma that you failed to timely file a pre-election campaign statement in connection with the June 7, 2022 Primary 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) and failed to file a 24-Hour Contribution Report (Form 497).

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. Controlling candidates and committee treasurers are jointly and severally liable for violations by the committee.³

The Act also requires candidate-controlled committees that receive a contribution(s), including a loan(s), totaling \$1,000 or more from a single source within 90 days before the election, or on the date of the election, to file a 24-Hour Contribution Report within 24 hours of receiving the contribution.⁴

You violated the Act by failing 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 failing to file the second pre-election campaign statement for the period covering April 24, 2022 through May 21, 2022, by the May 26, 2022 deadline. Additionally, you violated the Act by failing to file a 24-Hour

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.

³ Sections 83116.5 and 91006.

⁴ Sections 82036 and 84203.

Contribution Report within 24 hours of receiving a loan from the candidate's personal funds totaling \$3,360 on April 22, 2022.

However, for the following reasons, the Enforcement Division has decided to close this case with this warning letter rather than a fine: You were referred as part of the proactive pre-election program; you filed the first pre-election campaign statement before you were contacted by the Enforcement Division; you filed the second pre-election campaign statement immediately after you were contacted by the Enforcement Division; both pre-election statements were filed before the applicable election; the loan that triggered the 24-Hour Contribution Report was received from the candidate's personal funds; and, you have no history of violating the Act. Please note that while the Enforcement Division is closing this matter without a fine, your filing officer, the County of Sonoma, 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 Tara Stock at tstock@fppc.ca.gov or (916) 322-8241 with any questions you may have regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Christopher B. Burton

Christopher B. Burton, Acting Chief
Enforcement Division

CBB/ts