



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

June 16, 2025

Patrick Burt for City Council 2020
Patrick Burt
Sarah Bemus
Via email: Pat.Burt@PaloAlto.gov

Warning Letter Re: FPPC No. 2021-00167; Patrick Burt for City Council 2020, Patrick Burt, and Sarah Bemus

Dear Respondents,

The Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”).¹ This letter is in response to a sworn complaint alleging that Patrick Burt for City Council 2020, (the “Committee”), failed to timely file three 24-hour late contribution reports. Additionally, the complainant alleged that the Committee was late in completely disclosing all the information required in its semi-annual campaign report. The Enforcement Division has completed its review of the facts in this case. Specifically, we found that the Committee failed to timely file two 24-hour late contribution reports within 24 hours of receiving a contribution of \$1,000 or more within 90 days of an election. Additionally, we found that the Committee did not properly disclose the employer or occupation of several contributors.

The Act requires candidate-controlled committees that make or receive a late contribution to file a late contribution report within 24 hours of making or receiving the contribution.² A loan is considered a “contribution” under the Act.³ A “late contribution” includes a contribution(s) aggregating \$1,000 or more that is made to or received by a committee within 90 days before the date of the election, or on the date of the election in which the pertinent candidate is to be voted on.⁴ When a committee receives contributions (including loans) totaling \$100 or more from a person, the Act requires committees to report on the appropriate campaign statement the contributor’s full name; street address; occupation; the name of their employer, or if self-

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 18104 through 18998 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and all regulatory references are to this source.

² Section 84203.

³ Section 82015.

⁴ Section 82036.

employed, the name of the business; the date and amount received; and the cumulative amount of contributions.⁵

Your actions violated the Act because you failed to timely file two 24-hour late contribution reports within 24 hours of receiving a contribution of \$1,000 or more within 90 days of the November 2020 General Election. Additionally, you did not properly disclose the employer or occupation of several contributors on various campaign statements as the Committee improperly used acronyms for the employers. However, for the following reasons, the Enforcement Division has decided to close this case with this warning letter: the Committee reported the late contributions on several timely filed pre-election campaign statements, the late contribution reports were ultimately filed after enforcement contact, campaign statements with the incorrect employer or occupation were amended to properly disclose the employer or occupation of the contributor, and you and the Committee have no prior Enforcement history.

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 your client with the opportunity for a probable cause hearing or hearing before an Administrative Law Judge or the Commission. If your client wishes to avail himself of these proceedings by requesting that his 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.

If you need forms or a manual, or guidance regarding your obligations, please call the Commission's Toll-Free Advice Line at 1-866-275-3772 or visit our website at www.fppc.ca.gov.

Please feel free to contact me at jrivera@fppc.ca.gov or 279-238-5913 with any questions you may have regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Rivera

Jonathan Rivera, Commission Counsel
Enforcement Division

⁵ Section 84211, subd. (f).