

News from the FPPC



California Fair Political Practices Commission
1102 Q Street, Suite 3050, Sacramento, CA 95811
www.fppc.ca.gov

For Immediate Release: January 16, 2025

Contact: Shery Yang at (916) 322-7761

Additional information on each of the enforcement cases listed below can be found in the January agenda on the FPPC website at www.fppc.ca.gov. FPPC agendas are distributed and posted on the agency website at least 10 days prior to each monthly meeting.

The web version of the agenda includes links to the stipulations agreed to between the FPPC Enforcement Division and the individuals and organizations subject to the fines, or the default decisions proposed to the Commission. Exhibits in support of the stipulations and proposed default decisions are also available on the website. If you need further assistance, please contact the FPPC communications office at (916) 322-7761 or press@fppc.ca.gov.

I. The following are enforcement decisions approved by the Fair Political Practices Commission at its regular monthly meeting held on Friday, January 16, 2025. Decisions are listed by category and include a brief summary of each case and the total amount of any administrative fine in each case.

Misuse of Campaign Funds

In the Matter of Fernando Armenta and Noemi Armenta; FPPC No. 19/996. Staff: Bridgette Castillo, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Fernando Armenta was an unsuccessful candidate for Monterey County Board of Supervisors in the June 7, 2016 Primary Election. Fernando Armenta was a member of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors from 2000 until the end of 2016. Fernando Armenta for County Supervisor was Fernando Armenta's candidate-controlled committee. Noemi Armenta served as the Committee's treasurer. From August 2016 through July 2018, Fernando Armenta and Noemi Armenta misused committee campaign funds by making payments that were unrelated to a political, legislative, or governmental purpose, in violation of Government Code Sections 89510, subdivision (b); 89512; 89513; and 89517 (5 Counts). **Fine: \$25,000.**

Campaign Late Filer

In the Matter of AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Yes on 21 - Renters and Homeowners United to Keep Families in Their Homes, Sponsored by AIDS Healthcare Foundation, and Beverly Grossman Palmer; FPPC Nos. 20/338, 20/759, 20/760, & 20/818. Staff: Jenna Rinehart, Senior Commission Counsel, Paul Rasey, Special Investigator, and Bob Perna, Program Specialist. The AIDS Healthcare Foundation ("AHF") is represented by Bradley W.

Hertz of Law Offices of Bradley W. Hertz and the Yes on 21 Committee is represented by Beverly Grossman Palmer of Strumwasser & Woocher LLP. AHF, qualified as a lobbyist employer in 2019 and as a state major donor committee in 2020. The Yes on 21 Committee is a primarily formed state ballot measure committee for Proposition 21 on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot sponsored by AHF. Palmer serves as the Yes on 21 Committee's treasurer. AHF, as a lobbyist employer, failed to timely disclose, on its lobbyist employer reports, other payments to influence, in violation of Government Code Sections 86116 and 86117 (4 counts). Next, AHF, as a major donor committee, failed to timely disclose, on a major donor campaign statement, non-monetary contributions made along with the payee information and source of funds used, in violation of Government Code Sections 84211 and 84222 (1 count). Additionally, AHF failed to timely disclose non-monetary contributions made and failed to timely file 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84211 and 84203 (2 counts). The Yes on 21 Committee and Palmer failed to timely file 10-day reports, in violation of Government Code Section 85309 (3 counts), and failed to timely file 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84203 and 84203.3 (3 counts). **Fine: \$40,500.**

Campaign Bank Account

In the Matter of Paul Courtney and Committee to Elect Paul Anthony Courtney for Mayor in 2020; FPPC No. 23/014. Staff: Alex Rose, Senior Commission Counsel and Roone Petersen, Special Investigator. Paul Anthony Courtney was a successful candidate for Mayor of Barstow in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Paul Anthony Courtney for Mayor in 2020 was Courtney's candidate-controlled committee. Gabriela Humphrey served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Courtney failed to properly use campaign bank account for two semi-annual and two pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 85201 (4 counts). The Committee and Courtney improperly received cash contribution in the amount of \$800 from Paul Anthony Courtney, in violation of Government Code Section 84300 (1 count). The Committee and Courtney failed to timely report \$932 in expenditures on a semi-annual campaign statement for the reporting period ending on December 31, 2019, in violation of Government Code Section 84211. The Committee and Courtney failed to timely file one semi-annual and two pre-election campaign statements for the reporting periods ending on June 30, 2020, September 19, 2020, and October 17, 2020, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200 (1 count) and 84200.5 (2 counts). Chief Discretion was used in this matter to include counts 1 through 4 in tier one. **Fine: \$1,681 (Tier One).**

Recordkeeping

In the Matter of Women of Long Beach, Gary Crummitt, and Nadia Tushnet; FPPC No. 20/1029. Staff: Marissa Corona, Senior Commission Counsel and Kaitlin Osborn, Special Investigator. Women of Long Beach is a general purpose committee. Gary Crummitt served as the Committee's treasurer. Nadia Tushnet served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Crummitt, and Tushnet failed to timely file two semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (2 counts), failed to timely file three pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200.5 (3 counts), failed to timely file one 24-Hour Report, in violation of Government Code Section 84204 (1 count), and failed to timely file two verification of 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84213 (2 counts). The Committee, Crummitt, and Tushnet also failed to timely report subvendor payments, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (1 count), and failed to

keep adequate records for the 2020 calendar year, in violation of Government Code Section 84104 (1 count). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. Chief Discretion was used in this matter to have counts 5 through 8 be eligible for a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$1,307 (Tier One).**

Advertisements

In the Matter of Save Sonoma Jobs- No on Measure B, Bryce Skolfield, and David Wabel; FPPC No. 21/161. Staff: Laura Columbel, Commission Counsel and Kristin Hamilton, Special Investigator. Save Sonoma Jobs-No on Measure B is a primarily formed committee. Bryce Skolfield served as the Committee's treasurer. David Wabel served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Skolfield, and Wabel failed to timely file a Statement of Organization, in violation of Government Code Section 84101 (1 count), twelve 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code 84203 (12 counts), and seven semi-annual statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (7 counts). The Committee, Skolfield, and Wabel failed to report employment and occupation information for contributions received on two pre-election statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84211(f) (2 counts). The Committee, Skolfield, and Wabel failed to include proper advertisement disclosures on mass mailings, large print ads, and the Committee's website, in violation of Government Code Sections 84305 (2 counts), 84504.2 subdivision (b) (4 counts), and 84504.3 subdivision (c) (1 count). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. Chief Discretion was used in this matter to have counts 24 and 26-29 be eligible for a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$3,742 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Stop All Sprawl- A Committee in Support of Measure A and Oppose Measure B, Briana Baleskie, and Peter Anderson; FPPC 20/234. Staff: Cinthya Bernabé, Commission Counsel and Kristin Hamilton, Special Investigator. Stop All Sprawl- A Committee in Support of Measure A and Oppose Measure B is a primarily formed committee for the calendar year of 2020. Briana Baleskie served as the Committee's treasurer. Peter Anderson served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Baleskie, and Anderson failed to timely file an amended Statement of Organization, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (1 count), one pre-election campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84200.5 (1 count), two 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (2 counts), two 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (2 counts), and one semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (1 count). The Committee, Baleskie, and Anderson failed to timely disclose on two pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (2 count). The Committee, Baleskie, and Anderson failed to include proper advertisement disclosures on yard signs, in violation of Government Code Section 84504.2 (1 count). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$2,452 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Glendale Coalition for Better Government, Seda Khachaturian, and Frank Gallo; FPPC No. 22/835. Staff: Marissa Corona, Senior Commission Counsel and Kaitlin Osborn, Special Investigator. Glendale Coalition for Better Government is a general purpose committee. Seda Khachaturian served as the Committee's treasurer. Frank Gallo served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Khachaturian, and Gallo failed to timely file three semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (3 counts), failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200.5 (2 counts), failed to timely file two 24-Hour Reports, in violation of

Government Code Section 84204 (2 counts), and failed to include the proper advertisement disclosure on a yard sign, in violation of Government Code Section 84506.5 (1 count). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. Chief Discretion was used in this matter to have counts 3 through 7 be eligible for a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$641 (Tier One).**

Lobbying Reporting

In the Matter of Alzheimer's Orange County; FPPC No. 24/841. Staff: Chance Felkins, Commission Counsel. Alzheimer's Orange County is a lobbyist employer. Alzheimer's Orange County failed to timely file seventeen lobbyist employer quarterly reports, in violation of Government Code Section 86117 (17 counts). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as \$0 penalty. Chief Discretion was used in this matter to include counts 4 and 7 through 11 in tier one. **Fine: \$1,618 (Tier One).**

Campaign Late Filer

In the Matter of South Cord Management LLC and Elliot Lewis; FPPC No. 20/1038. Staff: Chance Felkins, Commission Counsel. The respondents in this matter were represented by Joseph A. Guardarrama of Kaufman Legal Group. South Cord management is a Major Donor Committee. Elliot Lewis serves as the responsible officer. The Committee failed to include the responsible officer on eighteen 24-Hour Reports, in violation of California Code of Regulation, Title 2, Section 18402.2 (18 counts). The Committee failed to timely file one Major Donor Campaign Statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84200, subdivision (b), (1 count). The Committee failed to timely file six 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (2 counts) and 82036, 82036.5, and 84204 (4 counts). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as \$0 penalty. Chief Discretion was used to include Major Donor Late Filer counts 1, and 3 through 6 in tier one, and Major Donor Late Filer count 1 in tier two. **Fine: \$3,900 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Paul Cook for Supervisor 2020 and Paul Cook; FPPC No. 21/102. Staff: Chance Felkins, Commission Counsel and Sonia Mangat, Program Specialist. This matter arose from an audit performed by the Audits & Assistance Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission. Paul Cook was a successful candidate for San Bernardino County Supervisor in the March 3, 2020 Primary Election. Paul Cook for Supervisor 2020 is Paul Cook's candidate-controlled committee. The Committee and Cook failed to timely report on two semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (2 counts), and two pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (2 counts). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$2,037 (Tiers One and Two).**

In the Matter of Diego Garcia for Richmond City Council 2018, Diego Garcia, and Annabella Leal; FPPC No. 22/568. Staff: Laura Columbel, Commission Counsel and Roone Peterson, Special Investigator. Diego Garcia was an unsuccessful candidate for Richmond City Council in the November 6, 2018 General Election. Diego Garcia for Richmond City Council 2018 was Garcia's candidate-controlled committee. Annabella Leal served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Garcia, and Leal failed to timely file eight semi-annual statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (8 counts). Certain violations are eligible for a

Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$1,572 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Motecuzoma Sanchez and Sanchez for Mayor 2020; FPPC No. 21/314.

Staff: Laura Columbel, Commission Counsel and Alethea Perez, Special Investigator. Sanchez was an unsuccessful candidate for the Mayor of Stockton in the March 3, 2020 Primary Election. Sanchez for Mayor 2020 was Sanchez's candidate-controlled committee. The Committee and Sanchez failed to timely file four semi-annual statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (4 counts); and failed to timely file three 24-Hour Reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84203 (3 counts). In addition, Sanchez failed to timely report income on the Candidate Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Government Code Section 87201 (1 count). Certain violations are eligible for a Warning Letter and are included in the streamline stipulation as a \$0 penalty. **Fine: \$1,093 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Andres Ramos for College Board 2022 and Andres Ramos; FPPC No. 24/481.

Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Vanessa Greer, Political Reform Consultant. Andres Ramos was a successful candidate for the Compton Community College District in the November 8, 2022 General Election. Andres Ramos for College Board 2022 is Ramos' candidate-controlled committee and serves as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Ramos failed to timely file three semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (3 counts). **Fine: \$600 (Tier One).**

Committee Naming Requirements

In the Matter of Committee to Support the Quality Teachers, Staff & Schools Measure 2020, Yes on I, Carol Briggs, and John Echeto; FPPC No. 21/1095.

Staff: Jonathan Rivera, Commission Counsel. Committee to Support the Quality Teachers, Staff & Schools Measure 2020, Yes on I was a primarily formed ballot measure committee in support of a school bond measure that appeared on the Los Angeles County ballot for the March 3, 2020 Primary Election. John Echeto was the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Briggs, and Echeto failed to comply with the Act's committee naming requirements on six campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84107 (6 counts). Chief Discretion was used in this matter to include count 3 in tier 2 and exclude counts 4 through 6 from receiving a streamline penalty. **Fine: \$2,400 (Tier Two).**

Statement of Economic Interests Late Filer

In the Matter of Tamara Vides; FPPC No. 23/449. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Shaina Elkin, Associate Governmental Program Analyst. Tamara Vides, as a member of the Public Agency Risk Sharing Authority, Central Coast Community Energy, CA Intergovernmental Risk Authority, and as Watsonville Assistant City Manager, failed to timely file the 2020 and 2022 Annual Statements of Economic Interest, in violation of Government Code Sections 87203 and 87302 (2 counts). **Fine: \$400 (Tier One).**