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2003 MAR 26 A 9:42

Congressman Ron Lewis
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03/08/2003

Chairman Ellen Weintraub
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463

AOR 2003-08

Dear Chairman Weintraub,

This communication is intended to seek an advisory opinion concerning ambiguous issues surrounding the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act.

I am seeking your advice on the issue of my involvement and my staff's involvement as part of the Republican Party of Kentucky (RPK) leadership and sitting as members of RPK's Republican State Central Committee (RSCC). The current structure and our involvement is explained below so the issue is better understood. I will quote elements of RPK's organizational manual for your convenience.

The Republican Party of Kentucky currently maintains an operating structure that places the "RSCC in full control of and over all subordinate and auxiliary Party organizations and campaign committees (1). This authority shall include the managing and directing of Party affairs in all parts of the Commonwealth including the collection and disbursement of Party funds; the promotion and supervision of campaigns of Republican candidates at the national, state, and local levels (2). And exercising such other duties, authorities, or and exercising such other duties, authorities, or privileges as imposed or granted either by State or Federal law and the rules of the Republican National Committee (3)."

The element I am most concerned with is contained within the second sentence. RPK is currently engaging in activities to raise soft money for state office elections. To the best of my knowledge, this practice will continue in the future. As members of the RSCC, my staff and I directly oversee the collection and disbursement of soft money as it relates to RPK and local party activity.

According to NRCC legal counsel, our assignment to the RSCC is prohibited by the BCRA; however, RPK attorneys disagree with that assessment. I am asking you to resolve this dispute and provide me with a written statement detailing your opinion.

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OFFICE OF GENERAL
COUNSEL

2003 MAR 17 P 2:11

Please address this issue promptly so I may discontinue our participation if this is found to be in violation of the BCRA. Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ron Lewis". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Ron Lewis