

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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ISSUE: 2016-29

For Immediate Release
July 15, 2016

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Weekly Digest Week of July 11 – 15

COMMISSION MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

On July 12, the Commission held an [executive session](#).

On July 14, the Commission held an [open meeting](#).

ADVISORY OPINIONS

Advisory Opinion Issued

[Advisory Opinion 2016-07 \(United National Committee\)](#). On July 14, the Commission issued an advisory opinion in response to a request from the United National Committee (the Committee), the governing body of the Unity Party. The Commission concluded that the Committee does not qualify as a national committee of a political party under the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the Act), and Commission regulations because, as a threshold matter, the Unity Party does not meet the definition of a “political party” under the Act.

Advisory Opinion Considered

[Advisory Opinion Request 2016-06 \(Internet Association and Internet Association Political Action Committee\)](#). On July 14, the Commission discussed three drafts in response to an advisory opinion request from the Internet Association, a trade organization representing members of the Internet industry, and its separate segregated fund, the Internet Association Political Action Committee, but was unable to reach consensus by the required four affirmative votes. The Commissioners held over the matter to develop a consensus draft to be submitted for a tally vote in the near future. The requestors asked a number of questions about their proposal to host an online candidate interaction and fundraising platform. During the discussion, the Commission heard from the requestor's counsel.

ENFORCEMENT

The Commission made public two closed cases, as follows. For more information, see the case documents in the [Enforcement Query System](#).

[MUR 6494](#)

COMPLAINANT: David Krikorian

RESPONDENTS: Representative Jeannette H. Schmidt; Schmidt for Congress Committee and Peter Schmidt, in his official capacity as treasurer (the Committee); Phillip Greenburg, individually; Peter Schmidt; Joseph Braun; the Turkish Coalition of America, Inc. (TCA); G. Lincoln McCurdy; Turkish American Legal Defense Fund; Bruce Fein; David Saltzman; Donald C. Brey; Sarah D. Morrison; and Elizabeth J. Watters

SUBJECT: The complaint alleged that TCA made and the Committee accepted prohibited in-kind contributions in the form of free legal services and that the Committee failed to disclose receipt of the contributions. The complaint also alleged that Rep. Schmidt and the Committee converted campaign funds to personal use when the Committee made two disbursements to a law firm for legal fees. Rep. Schmidt was a candidate for Ohio's 2nd Congressional District in 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012.

DISPOSITION: The Commission found reason to believe the Committee accepted prohibited in-kind contributions from TCA and entered into conciliation agreements providing for the Committee to pay a civil penalty of \$2,500 and TCA to pay a civil penalty of \$25,000. The Commission found no reason to believe Rep. Schmidt and the Committee violated the personal use prohibition. The Commission found no reason to believe Fein, Saltzman, Brey, Morrison, Watters or Braun, or Greenburg or Peter Schmidt in their individual capacities, violated the Act or Commission regulations. The Commission closed the file in connection with the allegation that Rep. Schmidt accepted prohibited in-kind contributions.

[MUR 6936](#)

COMPLAINANT: Christopher Sheldon

RESPONDENTS: Geoff Charles; and 94 HJY (WHJY)

SUBJECT: The complaint alleged that radio station 94 HJY (WHJY) and Charles, a radio personality, broadcast a public communication containing express advocacy without a disclaimer stating who paid for it.

DISPOSITION: The Commission found no reason to believe WHJY or Charles violated the Act with regard to the publication and distribution of statements and solicitations.

LITIGATION

[Level the Playing Field, et al. v. FEC](#) (Case 1:15-cv-00961-TSC). On July 13, the Commission filed its [Reply Brief in Support of Its Motion for Summary Judgment](#) in the District Court for the District of Columbia.

OUTREACH

On July 11, Commissioner Ann M. Ravel met with Harvard Law students to discuss the role and work of the Commission, as well as recent developments in campaign finance law.

On July 13, Commissioner Lee E. Goodman participated in a podcast with TechFreedom discussing the importance of free speech on the Internet, new media, and social media.

On July 14, Commissioner Ravel met with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association to discuss the role and work of the Commission, campaign finance law and the role of political parties in American elections.

RULEMAKING AND AGENCY PROCEDURES

[Proposed Statement of Policy Regarding the Public Disclosure of Closed Enforcement Documents](#). On July 14, the Commission approved a statement of policy that would expand the range of records on enforcement and administrative functions to be made publicly available on a regular basis.

[Revisions to Forms](#). On July 14, the Commission voted to adopt revisions to forms, which are intended to assist with compliance, provide clearer disclosure, and make the forms more consistent with one another.

[REG 2013-01: Draft Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Technological Modernization](#). On July 14, the Commission held over discussion of a draft NPRM on technological modernization.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS

On July 15: July Quarterly Reports were due. For more information on quarterly reporting dates, refer to the [2016 Quarterly Reporting page](#) of the Commission website.

PRESS RELEASES

[FEC Issues Advisory Opinion, Discusses a Second Advisory Opinion Request, Approves Policy to Expand Disclosure of Enforcement Matters and Adopts Revisions to Reporting Forms](#) (issued July 14)

UPCOMING COMMISSION MEETINGS AND HEARINGS

August 18: The Commission is scheduled to hold an [executive session](#).

August 23: The Commission is scheduled to hold an [open meeting](#).

Meeting dates are subject to change. Please contact the Press Office the week of the scheduled meeting for confirmation.

UPCOMING REPORTING DUE DATES

July 20: July Monthly Reports are due. For more information on monthly reporting dates, refer to the [2016 Monthly Reporting page](#) of the Commission website.

The Commission posted the filing deadlines for the Special General Election in Pennsylvania's 2nd Congressional District. For information on reporting dates for this election, refer to the [Special Election Report Notice](#).

DISCLOSURE INITIATIVES

Commission staff, together with our partners at 18F, continue to add new features to the agency's beta.fec.gov website. The Commission encourages website visitors to submit comments and questions by clicking on the "Feedback" tab at the bottom of each page.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH MATERIALS

Additional research materials about the agency, campaign finance information, and election results are available through the [Library section](#) of the Commission website.

The [2016 edition of the Combined Federal State Disclosure and Election Directory](#) is available in the [Public Records](#) section of the Commission website. This publication identifies the federal and state agencies responsible for the disclosure of campaign finances, lobbying, personal finances, public financing, candidates on the ballot, election results, spending on state initiatives and other financial filings.

The Commission has published the [July Record](#) newsletter. [Sign up](#) to receive email notification when new Record articles are posted.

The 2016 edition of [Title 11 of the Code of Federal Regulations](#) can be downloaded from the website. To order printed copies, call (800) 424-9530 (press 6) or send an email to info@fec.gov.

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