



THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20463

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**SENSITIVE**

**MEMORANDUM**

September 8, 2006

TO: The Commission

THROUGH: Patrina M. Clark *pmc*  
Staff Director

FROM: Lynn M. Fraser, Acting Director *lmf*  
Alternative Dispute Resolution Office

SUBJECT: ADR 321 Democratic Party of Oklahoma and Nina Ritchie, Treasurer,  
Recommendation to Approve Settlement Agreement

Attached for your review is a signed negotiated ADR Settlement Agreement pertaining to **ADR 321 (RR 05L-57)**. This case was opened on April 5, 2006, and was assigned to the ADR Office on May 4, 2006.

**SUMMARY:** RAD referred the Democratic Party of Oklahoma and Nina Ritchie, Treasurer, ("Respondents" or the "Committee") for failing to file four (4) 24-Hour Notices for independent expenditures totaling \$231,000. The expenditures were made after the 20<sup>th</sup> day, but more than 24 hours, before the 2002 General Election. On September 30, 2002, RAD sent the Committee a Prior Notice containing a section titled *24 Hour Report on Independent Expenditures*.

In an amended 2002 30 Day Post-General Report, filed on March 26, 2003, Respondents included a Schedule E disclosing four (4) independent expenditures, totaling \$231,000, all made on behalf of one (1) federal candidate. In response to two (2) RFAI's sent to the Committee on April 24, 2003, and May 15, 2003, Respondents filed a miscellaneous e-text submission to the Commission apologizing for failing to file the 24-Hour Notices. They stated "[w]e have reviewed our procedures for handling these situations and feel that we have a much better procedure in place now."

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The independent expenditures at issue were made nearly four years ago, and Respondents contend that the omission of the 24-Hour Notices was, in large part, due to inexperienced staff. The Committee argues that it has undertaken numerous steps to ensure compliance, such as appointing a new Chairwoman, and hiring an experienced compliance specialist. The Committee's inexperienced staff's difficulties were exacerbated when its experienced Comptroller died in 2001, and the person who filled in made many errors, leaving the Committee significantly in debt. That person's employment was terminated.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Approve the attached settlement agreement of Democratic Party of Oklahoma and Nina Ritchie, in her official capacity as Treasurer.
2. Approve the appropriate letters.
3. Close the file on this matter.