



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

Michael G. Adams  
Chalmers Pak Burch & Adams LLC  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, #190-612  
Washington, DC 20004

**AUG 08 2017**

RE: MUR 7156  
Hurd for Congress  
and Bradley T. Crate, as Treasurer  
The Honorable William Hurd

Dear Mr. Adams:

On October 25, 2016, the Federal Election Commission ("Commission") notified your clients, Hurd for Congress and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer, and The Honorable William Hurd, of a complaint alleging violations of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended. On July 19, 2017, based upon the information contained in the complaint, and information provided by you, the Commission decided to exercise its prosecutorial discretion to dismiss the complaint and close its file in this matter. Accordingly, the Commission closed its file in this matter on July 19, 2017.

Documents related to the case will be placed on the public record within 30 days. See Statement of Policy Regarding Disclosure of Closed Enforcement and Related Files, 68 Fed. Reg. 70,426 (Dec. 18, 2003) and Statement of Policy Regarding Placing First General Counsel's Reports on the Public Record, 74 Fed. Reg. 66,132 (Dec. 14, 2009). A copy of the General Counsel's Report is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact Don Campbell, the attorney assigned to this matter, at (202) 694-1650.

Sincerely,

Lisa J. Stevenson  
Acting General Counsel

BY:   
Jeff S. Jordan  
Assistant General Counsel  
Complaints Examination and  
Legal Administration

Enclosure  
General Counsel's Report

170444-1007

**BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**  
**ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY SYSTEM**  
**DISMISSAL REPORT**

**MUR: 7156**

**Complaint Receipt Dates:** October 20, 2016  
November 4, 2016<sup>1</sup>

**Response Date:** December 8, 2016

**Respondents:** Will Hurd for Congress,  
and Bradley T. Crate, as treasurer  
(collectively the "Committee")  
William Hurd

**EPS Rating:**

**Alleged Statutory/  
Regulatory Violations:**

**52 U.S.C. §§ 30120(a)(1), (d)(1)(B)**  
**11 C.F.R. §§ 110.11(b)(1), (c)(3)(ii), (iii)**

The Complaint and a Supplement allege that Hurd and the Committee violated the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended ("the Act"), and Commission regulations when the Committee paid for two television ads that contained written disclaimers that were not clearly readable.<sup>2</sup> The Complaint also alleges that in one of the two ads, the candidate's image was missing during his audio statement of approval.

Respondents deny the allegations and assert that the Complaint relies on an inaccurate version of one of the ads; that version displays a blank, black screen during the candidate's statement of approval. The Response links to what it maintains is the accurate version of the ad.<sup>3</sup> In that version, the candidate's image is visible; however, the written disclaimer first appears in white text against a colored background and then part of the background changes to white, which makes some of the white text difficult to read. See 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(c)(3)(iii)(C) ("[t]he

<sup>1</sup> The Respondents only responded to the original Complaint, which alleged that one of Hurd's ads contained an improper disclaimer and was missing an image of the candidate. The Supplement alleged that a second ad included an improper disclaimer.

<sup>2</sup> The Complaint and Supplement state that the ads aired on television, and include internet links to the ads. See [http://mycmag.kantarmediانا.com/KM/cmagvidbin2/HOUSE\\_TX23\\_HURD\\_DARKEST\\_CORNERS.html](http://mycmag.kantarmediانا.com/KM/cmagvidbin2/HOUSE_TX23_HURD_DARKEST_CORNERS.html); [http://mycmag.kantarmediانا.com/KM/cmagvidbin2/HOUSE\\_TX23\\_HURD\\_GREATEST\\_HONOR.html](http://mycmag.kantarmediانا.com/KM/cmagvidbin2/HOUSE_TX23_HURD_GREATEST_HONOR.html).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://admo.advertisinganalyticsllc.com/viewer/F3c19506-0bfc-4ecf-9f4e-4a1d582c329f>. The Committee did not file a separate response to the Supplement, and did not address the second ad.

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statement must appear with a reasonable degree of color contrast between the background and the text of the statement.”). Similarly, in the second ad, a light-colored background again makes some of disclaimer’s white text difficult to read. Respondents did not respond to the Supplement.

Based on its experience and expertise, the Commission has established an Enforcement Priority System using formal, pre-determined scoring criteria to allocate agency resources and assess whether particular matters warrant further administrative enforcement proceedings. These criteria include (1) the gravity of the alleged violation, taking into account both the type of activity and the amount in violation; (2) the apparent impact the alleged violation may have had on the electoral process; (3) the complexity of the legal issues raised in the matter; and (4) recent trends in potential violations and other developments in the law. This matter is rated as low priority for Commission action after application of these pre-established criteria. Given that low rating, the technical nature of the alleged violations, the likelihood that the general public would have not have been confused as to who sponsored and paid for the ads, we recommend that the Commission dismiss the allegations consistent with the Commission’s prosecutorial discretion to determine the proper ordering of its priorities and use of agency resources. *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821, 831-32 (1985). We also recommend that the Commission close the file as to all Respondents and send the appropriate letters.

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