



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

Douglas C. Curtis

MAY 17 2019

Englewood, FL 34224

RE: MUR 7376  
(Republican Party of Florida, *et al.*)

Dear Mr. Curtis:

On May 4, 2018, the Federal Election Commission notified you of a complaint alleging violations of certain sections of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended ("the Act"). A copy of the complaint was forwarded to you at that time. Upon further review of the allegations contained in the complaint, and information supplied by you, the Commission, on May 7, 2019, voted to dismiss this matter.

Documents related to the case will be placed on the public record within 30 days. *See Disclosure of Certain Documents in Enforcement and Other Matters*, 81 Fed. Reg. 50,702 (Aug. 2, 2016). The Factual and Legal Analysis, which more fully explains the Commission's decision, is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (202) 694-1650.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jin Lee".

Jin Lee  
Acting Assistant General Counsel

Enclosure:  
Factual and Legal Analysis

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**FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

**FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS**

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3 **RESPONDENTS:** Republican Party of Florida and Mike Moberley **MUR 7376**  
4 In his official capacity as treasurer  
5 Charlotte County Republican Executive Committee  
6 Charlotte County Republican Club  
7 West Charlotte County Republican Club  
8 Friends of Connie Mack/Mack PAC and David  
9 Satterfield in his official capacity as treasurer  
10 Douglas Curtis  
11 Raymond Corcoran  
12 Bill Folchi  
13 Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. and Bradley  
14 T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer

15 **I. INTRODUCTION**

16 Based upon an internal audit of the Charlotte County Republican Executive Committee  
17 (“CCREC”), the Complaint alleges that CCREC and two other local Republican organizations,  
18 Charlotte County Republican Club (“Charlotte County Club”) and West Charlotte County  
19 Republican Club (“West Charlotte Club”), spent non-federal funds in support of Donald Trump  
20 during the 2016 presidential election.<sup>1</sup> The Complaint specifically alleges that, although none of  
21 the local organizations established a federal campaign account, CCREC spent \$5,000 on three  
22 pro-Trump billboards and that the West Charlotte Club and Charlotte County Club (collectively  
23 “Republican Clubs”) made contributions to CCREC in support of the billboards.<sup>2</sup>

24 In addition, the Complaint alleges that the local party organizations sponsored a rally and  
25 solicited contributions for Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. (“Trump Committee”) and paid  
26 rent and office expenses for the Trump Committee.<sup>3</sup> The Complaint further alleges that CCREC

<sup>1</sup> Although the Complaint cites both federal and state law, the Commission only addresses the federal allegations.

<sup>2</sup> Compl. at 7, 9 (Apr. 30, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 2-3, 7.

1 made an excessive \$10,000 contribution to Friends of Connie Mack/Mack PAC (“Mack  
2 Committee”) during the 2012 election cycle.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the Complainant, who is the Republican  
3 State Committeeman for Charlotte County, claims that after he alerted the Republican Party of  
4 Florida (“RPOF”) of the allegedly illegal conduct described above, RPOF failed to take any  
5 action.<sup>5</sup>

6 In response, West Charlotte Club and its President Douglas Curtis acknowledge that the  
7 Club made payments to CCREC to defray the costs of the pro-Trump billboards.<sup>6</sup> Curtis also  
8 acknowledges that the Club spent funds on a “Trump Rally” and that the event included  
9 fundraising on behalf of the Trump Committee.<sup>7</sup> Further, Curtis acknowledged in his response  
10 that the Charlotte County Chair for the Trump campaign, who was also an officer of the West  
11 Charlotte Club, approved the billboards and collected contributions on behalf of the Trump  
12 Committee at the rally.<sup>8</sup> West Charlotte Club denies that it provided any office space or other in-  
13 kind support to local Trump Committee offices.<sup>9</sup> The Trump Committee argues that the  
14 Complaint fails to allege a violation by the campaign because the rally was conducted  
15 independently of the Trump Committee.<sup>10</sup> RPOF argues that the Complaint fails to allege that it  
16 violated the Act and should be dismissed.<sup>11</sup> The Mack Committee denies the allegation that it

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 2, 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* at 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> See Douglas Curtis Resp., Ex. 1A (Sept. 14, 2018); West Charlotte Club Resp. at 39 (Sept. 14, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Douglas Curtis Resp. at 10-11. The West Charlotte Club characterized the event as a “Rally to get the word out to vote Republican.” West Charlotte Club Resp. at 38.

<sup>8</sup> Douglas Curtis Resp. at 12, 17; West Charlotte Club Resp. at 39.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Curtis Resp. at 10.

<sup>10</sup> Trump Committee Resp. (June 20, 2018).

<sup>11</sup> See RPOF Resp. at 1, 6 (June 25, 2018).

1 accepted an excessive contribution from CCREC during the 2012 election cycle.<sup>12</sup> CCREC and  
2 Charlotte County Club did not respond.

3 As discussed below, the available information indicates that CCREC and the West  
4 Charlotte Club may have: become political committees in 2016 but failed to organize, register,  
5 and report as such, made excessive contributions to the Trump Committee, and failed to use  
6 federal funds when they financed federal election activity as required by the Act. Nevertheless,  
7 given the small amounts at issue, the Commission exercises its prosecutorial discretion and  
8 dismisses the allegations that CCREC and the West Charlotte Club violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30102,  
9 30103, 30104, 30116, and 30125(b). To the extent that the Charlotte County Club was involved  
10 in some of the conduct described above, the Commission dismisses those allegations as well.  
11 Additionally, the Commission dismisses the allegations that the Trump Committee and Raymond  
12 Corcoran violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116 and 30125(e). The Commission, however, cautions  
13 CCREC, West Charlotte Club, the Trump Committee, and Corcoran of their obligation to  
14 comply with 52 U.S.C. §§ 30102, 30103, 30104, 30116, and 30125.

15 The Commission also exercises its prosecutorial discretion not to pursue the remaining  
16 allegations as to the other respondents. Because the facts indicate that CCREC only made a  
17 \$1,000 contribution to the Mack Committee in 2012, the Commission finds no reason to believe  
18 that CCREC and the Mack Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a) and (f) by making and  
19 receiving excessive contributions. Finally, because the Complaint does not allege sufficient facts  
20 to show that RPOF and Douglas Curtis and Bill Folchi, in their individual capacities, violated the  
21 Act, the Commission dismisses the matter as to them.

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<sup>12</sup> Mack Committee Resp. (May 16, 2018).

1 **II. FACTS**

2 **A. Structure of Florida Republican Party Organizations**

3 RPOF is a qualified party committee registered with the Commission.<sup>13</sup> CCREC is a  
4 Republican county executive committee under Florida law and is subject to RPOF rules; it is not  
5 registered with the Commission.<sup>14</sup> Bill Folchi is the former CCREC Chairman.<sup>15</sup>

6 Both the West Charlotte and Charlotte County Clubs are private, independent  
7 organizations authorized by written RPOF charter; neither Club is registered with the  
8 Commission.<sup>16</sup> Douglas Curtis is the current President of West Charlotte Club, and he was its  
9 Vice President during the 2016 election cycle.<sup>17</sup> Ray Corcoran is both a West Charlotte Club  
10 officer and, during the 2016 campaign, was Charlotte County Chair for the Trump campaign.<sup>18</sup>

11 **B. Efforts by Local Florida Party Organizations to Support Trump Campaign**  
12 **in 2016**

13 Relying on an April 10, 2017 audit of the CCREC, the Complaint alleges that CCREC,  
14 West Charlotte Club, and the Charlotte County Club collectively spent over \$10,000 to help elect  
15 Donald Trump as President in 2016 without establishing federal campaign accounts. According  
16 to an internal audit document, those expenses include: (1) the purchase of billboards for a  
17 federal candidate (\$5,000); (2) reimbursement to an individual for expenses relating to a federal

<sup>13</sup> Republican Party of Florida, Statement of Organization (Nov. 5, 2018).

<sup>14</sup> RPOF Resp. at 2; Compl. at 7. The CCREC website indicates that it is not authorized by any candidate or candidate committee. See <http://mobile.charlottegop.com/about.shtml>.

<sup>15</sup> See Compl. Encl. 8.

<sup>16</sup> See RPOF Resp. at 2 (explaining that Florida law prohibits the use of the "Republican" name without express authorization from the state party executive committee).

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Curtis Resp. at 9.

<sup>18</sup> Compl. at 2; Douglas Curtis Resp. at 10-11. The Trump Committee also identifies Corcoran as the campaign's Charlotte County chair but states that he was "only a campaign volunteer." Trump Committee Resp. at 1, fn. 1.

1 candidate's publicity (\$704.10); (3) costs for holding a rally to support a federal candidate  
2 (\$4,196.00); and (4) bus transportation to that rally (\$1,120.88).<sup>19</sup> Further, the audit estimated  
3 that over \$3,000 had been collected at "the event for a federal candidate" — which appears to be  
4 a reference to the rally — and that CCREC may have received additional funds from the sale of  
5 Trump campaign materials.<sup>20</sup> According to the Complainant, who was the Chairman of the  
6 Audit Committee, CCREC made all of the expenses referenced above to support Donald  
7 Trump.<sup>21</sup>

8 1. Billboards

9 The Complaint states that CCREC spent \$5,000 on billboards "for the election of Donald  
10 Trump."<sup>22</sup> West Charlotte Club admits that it paid \$1,665 to CCREC on August 2, 2016, for the  
11 purpose of funding those billboards.<sup>23</sup> Further, the billboards were all approved by Corcoran,  
12 who was also the Charlotte County Chairman for the Trump Campaign, the West Charlotte  
13 Club's Board, and CCREC Chairman Bill Folchi.<sup>24</sup> According to West Charlotte Club's August  
14 2016 newsletter, the billboards displayed a picture of Trump with the Trump campaign logo and  
15 slogan, stating: "TRUMP/PENCE/MAKE AMERICAN GREAT AGAIN!"<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Addendum to the CCREC Audit (Apr. 10, 2017); Compl. at 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> See Compl. at 2-3, 7-9.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>23</sup> West Charlotte Club Resp. at 39 (including copies of the check stubs). There are two responses on West Charlotte Club letterhead: one that has an inside address showing that it is from Claudette Curtis ("West Charlotte Club Resp.") and one with an inside address showing that it is from Douglas Curtis ("Douglas Curtis Resp."). Both responses are dated June 19, 2018, and begin "I, Douglas Curtis . . ." indicating that they were both written by Douglas Curtis.

<sup>24</sup> *Id.*

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., West Charlotte Club August 2016 Newsletter at 5-9, available at <https://www.scribd.com/book/321929019/West-Charlotte-Club-august-2016-newsletter-pdf> (publicizing the event

1                   2.     Trump Rally

2             The Complaint alleges that on October 24, 2016, CCREC spent \$4,196 to rent a venue in  
3 Englewood, Florida to hold a rally in support of Trump and received reimbursement from the  
4 West Charlotte Club for that payment.<sup>26</sup> As reflected in the audit document, West Charlotte  
5 Club also paid \$1,120.88 for bus transportation to the event and \$704.10 for publicity for the  
6 event.<sup>27</sup>

7             The Trump Committee's Response attaches a Facebook post regarding the rally which  
8 begins, "Stand UP, Be HEARD, Make America Great Again, Fight for America and ELECT  
9 DONALD J TRUMP."<sup>28</sup> West Charlotte Club acknowledges that it made the reimbursement and  
10 that the cost covered rent for the facility, food, and drinks.<sup>29</sup> In the West Charlotte Club response  
11 submitted directly by its President, Douglas Curtis, Curtis indicates that over 700 people  
12 attended.<sup>30</sup>

13             West Charlotte Club allegedly collected over \$3,000 in contributions to the Trump  
14 Committee at the event.<sup>31</sup> All contributions collected during event were collected by Corcoran  
15 and "sent directly to Trump Headquarters in NY."<sup>32</sup> Although the Complaint alleges that

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and suggesting that, "[w]ith no dinner costs, it is asked that attendees donate an amount equal or more than what they would normally pay for dinner, with checks made to the 'Donald J. Trump Campaign'").

<sup>26</sup> Compl. at 7.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.* at 9.

<sup>28</sup> Trump Committee Resp., Attach 1.

<sup>29</sup> Curtis Resp. at 10-12, 17; West Charlotte Club Resp. at 38.

<sup>30</sup> Curtis Resp. at 10. *See also* West Charlotte Club Resp. at 38.

<sup>31</sup> *See* Douglas Curtis Resp. at 12; Compl. at 7.

<sup>32</sup> West Charlotte Club Resp. at 11. In his response, Corcoran describes the event as a "get out the vote" event and does not discuss soliciting or receiving contributions for the Trump Committee. Ray Corcoran Resp. at ¶ 2 (June 27, 2018).

1 respondents may have sold Trump campaign materials, including shirts and hats, at the rally for  
2 an unknown dollar amount, West Charlotte Club denies that it sold such merchandise.<sup>33</sup>

3           3.     Office Space

4           The Complaint alleges that CCREC and the Republican Clubs paid rent and other  
5 expenses for Trump Committee offices in Florida.<sup>34</sup> The Complaint, however, does not identify  
6 any specific payments by CCREC or the Republican Clubs in support of these allegations.

7           Curtis responds that in 2016, he held meetings in his office where the West Charlotte  
8 Club Board discussed ways to promote Trump.<sup>35</sup> He states that he never received payments for  
9 such meetings and that he never sponsored a Trump Campaign office.<sup>36</sup>

10           C.     **CCREC's 2012 Contribution to Mack Committee**

11           The Complaint alleges that CCREC made a \$10,000 contribution to the Mack Committee  
12 during the 2012 election cycle.<sup>37</sup> Commission records show that the Mack Committee disclosed  
13 a \$1,000 contribution from CCREC received on October 6, 2012.<sup>38</sup> CCREC also disclosed this  
14 contribution on its state reports.<sup>39</sup> The Mack Committee's disclosure reports do not show any  
15 other contributions from CCREC.

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33     Curtis Resp. at 17.

34     Compl. at 9.

35     Curtis Resp. at 10-11.

36     *Id.*

37     Compl. at 2.

38     Mack Committee 2012 12-Day Pre-General Report (Oct. 25, 2012) at 297.

39     See CCREC Campaign Treasurer's Report Summary for Aug. 10-Nov. 1, 2012 at 2 (Oct. 29, 2012),  
available at [https://www.voterfocus.com/CampaignFinance/pdf\\_charlotte/e15c205\\_G4\\_dhc1646sdc188.pdf](https://www.voterfocus.com/CampaignFinance/pdf_charlotte/e15c205_G4_dhc1646sdc188.pdf).

1 **III. Legal Analysis**

2 **A. Political Committee Status**

3 Under the Act, a local committee of a political party is a political committee if it: (1)  
4 receives contributions aggregating in excess of \$5,000 during a calendar year; (2) makes  
5 payments exempted from the definition of contribution or expenditure aggregating in excess of  
6 \$5,000 during a calendar year; (3) makes contributions aggregating in excess of \$1,000 during a  
7 calendar year; or (4) makes expenditures aggregating in excess of \$1,000 during a calendar  
8 year.<sup>40</sup> Commission regulations define a local committee of a political party as an organization  
9 that by virtue of the by-laws of a political party or the operation of state law is part of the official  
10 party structure, and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the political party at the level  
11 of city, county, neighborhood, ward, district, precinct, or any other subdivision of a state.<sup>41</sup>

12 An "expenditure" is defined as "any purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance,  
13 deposit, or gift of money or anything of value made by any person for the purpose of influencing  
14 any election for Federal office."<sup>42</sup> To assess whether an organization has made an "expenditure"  
15 that would satisfy the statutory threshold for political committee status, the Commission analyzes  
16 whether spending on any of an organization's communications made independently of a  
17 candidate constitutes express advocacy under 11 C.F.R. § 100.22.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(4)(C); 11 C.F.R. §§ 100.5(c), 102.1(d).

<sup>41</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 100.14(b).

<sup>42</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(9)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 100.111.

<sup>43</sup> See Political Committee Status, 72 Fed. Reg. 5,595, 5,606 (Feb. 7, 2007) (Supplemental Explanation and Justification) ("Supplemental E&J").

1 The term "contribution" includes any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of  
2 money or anything of value made by any person for the purpose of influencing any election for  
3 Federal office.<sup>44</sup> The phrase "anything of value" includes all in-kind contributions.<sup>45</sup>

4 The available information indicates that CCREC, West Charlotte Club, and Charlotte  
5 County Club are organizations that are part of the official party structure by virtue of RPOF rules  
6 and Florida law. CCREC is a county executive committee established under Florida law and is  
7 subject to the rules of RPOF. The West Charlotte and Charlotte County Clubs are chartered by  
8 RPOF and must similarly abide by RPOF rules. Accordingly, CCREC, West Charlotte Club, and  
9 Charlotte County Club qualify as local committees of a political party under 11 C.F.R.  
10 § 100.14(b).

11 Moreover, CCREC and West Charlotte Club appear to have made contributions and  
12 expenditures that exceeded the \$1,000 threshold for becoming a political committee under  
13 52 U.S.C. § 30101(4)(c). The record indicates that the CCREC and West Charlotte Club spent  
14 \$5,000 on pro-Trump billboards. The billboards apparently depicted a picture of Trump next to  
15 an official logo of the 2016 Trump campaign and campaign slogan "Make America Great  
16 Again." The language on the billboards contained the type of phrases or slogans that expressly  
17 advocate the election of a clearly identified federal candidate under section 100.22(a).<sup>46</sup> West

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<sup>44</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(8)(A)(i).

<sup>45</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 100.52(d)(1).

<sup>46</sup> A communication expressly advocates the election or defeat of a clearly identified federal candidate under section 100.22(a) if it uses phrases including, but not limited to, "Support the Democratic nominee" and "vote against Old Hickory" or "'defeat' accompanied by a picture of one or more candidates," or "reject the incumbent," or "communications of campaign slogan(s) or individual word(s), which in context can have no other reasonable meaning than to urge the election or defeat of one or more clearly identified candidates such as posters, bumper stickers, advertisements, etc., which say 'Nixon's the One,' 'Carter '76,' 'Reagan/Bush,' or 'Mondale!'" or "vote Pro-Life" or "vote Pro-Choice" with a listing of clearly identified candidates described as Pro-Life or Pro-Choice. 11 C.F.R. § 100.22(a).

1 Charlotte Club also made the \$1,665 contribution to CCREC in support of the billboards that  
2 advocated for Trump's election.

3 Further, West Charlotte Club indicates that Ray Corcoran was also the Charlotte County  
4 Chairman for the Trump campaign and participated in approving the billboards. If Corcoran was  
5 acting as an agent of the Trump Committee,<sup>47</sup> the billboards could constitute a coordinated  
6 communication under 11 C.F.R. § 109.37,<sup>48</sup> and the \$5,000 payment would have constituted an  
7 in-kind contribution to the Trump Committee.<sup>49</sup>

8 With respect to the October 2016 rally, expenses, including the hall rental, publicity, and  
9 related transportation costs, appear to be around \$6,020.98. Under certain circumstances, a  
10 payment for a rally may constitute a contribution to a candidate.

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<sup>47</sup> For the purposes of evaluating coordination allegations under 11 C.F.R. § 109, an "agent" of a federal candidate means any person who has actual authority, either express or implied, to, *inter alia*, either make or authorize a communication that meets one or more of the content standards set forth in 11 C.F.R. § 109.21(c) on behalf of the candidate, or be materially involved in decisions regarding the content of the communication, means or mode of communication, or the size or prominence of a printed communication. 11 C.F.R. § 109.3(b)(2), (4). Here, the Trump Committee admits that Corcoran was the Committee's "Charlotte County Chair," and West Charlotte Club's Response indicates that "approval came from" persons including Corcoran. *See* West Charlotte Resp. 2 at 39. No response further characterizes Corcoran's authority to authorize communications on behalf of the Trump Committee.

<sup>48</sup> The Commission's regulations provide that a political party committee payment for a communication "coordinated with a candidate, a candidate's authorized committee, or an agent of either of the foregoing" must be treated as either an in-kind contribution to, or coordinated party expenditure on behalf of, the candidate. 11 C.F.R. § 109.37(a), (b). To determine whether a communication constitutes a "party coordinated communication," Commission regulations apply a three-prong test. 11 C.F.R. § 109.37(a)(1)-(3). First, the communication must be paid for by a political party committee or its agent. 11 C.F.R. § 109.37(a)(1). Second, the communication must satisfy at least one of three content standards. 11 C.F.R. § 109.37(a)(2)(i)-(iii). Finally, the communication must satisfy one of six conduct standards. 11 C.F.R. § 109.37(a)(3); *see also* § 109.21(d)(1)-(6).

<sup>49</sup> The billboard apparently included a disclaimer: "ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATION PAID FOR IN KIND BY THE CHARLOTTE COUNTY REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE." Aside from the fact that a billboard cannot be an electioneering communication under FECA, *see* 52 U.S.C. § 30104(f)(3), if Corcoran approved the billboard as the Trump Committee's agent, then the disclaimer should have included a statement that the communication was authorized by Trump, the Trump Committee, or an agent thereof. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 30120(a); 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(b)(2). However, given the small amount at issue, the Commission dismisses this allegation.

1 Even if the CCREC and West Charlotte Club triggered political committee status, the  
2 amount in violation for each Respondent is small. With respect to Charlotte County Club, it is  
3 unclear what if any funds this Club spent on federal campaign activity. Based on these  
4 circumstances, we do not believe that this matter warrants further use of Commission resources.  
5 Accordingly, the Commission exercises its prosecutorial discretion and dismisses the allegations  
6 that CCREC, West Charlotte Club, and Charlotte County Club violated 52 U.S.C. §§ 30102,  
7 30103 and 30104 by failing to organize, register, and report as political committees.<sup>50</sup> The  
8 Commission cautions CCREC and West Charlotte Club about the requirement to register and  
9 report as political committees.

10 **B. Excessive Contributions**

11 Once a local party organization is required to register with the Commission, it becomes a  
12 local political party committee and is presumed to be affiliated with all other federal committees  
13 of that party within that state.<sup>51</sup> A party committee that is affiliated with a qualified  
14 multicandidate committee such as RPOF automatically shares that committee's per candidate,

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<sup>50</sup> See *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821 (1985); see also MUR 7252 (Let's Fire Tom MacArthur's Billboard) (dismissing allegations as prosecutorial discretion where an unregistered group raised \$5,236 to erect a billboard advocating for the defeat of a federal candidate and made only a single expenditure for one billboard that was up for a month); MUR 6367 (Veterans for the Constitution) (dismissing allegations with caution where "loose affiliation" of three individuals raised \$1,350 that may have been used to fund two billboards and respondents took remedial action to register and report as a political committee); MUR 6205 (Fort Bend Democrats) (dismissing allegations where the federal portion of the expenses for door hangers may have exceeded the \$1,000 threshold for expenditures by approximately \$500); MUR 6286 (Our Democratic Organization) (dismissing allegations where federal portion of mailer likely exceeded \$1,000 by small amount); MUR 6153 (New Mexico Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, *et al.*) (dismissing allegations where a party committee exceeded the statutory threshold for political committee status by approximately \$500).

<sup>51</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 110.3(b)(3). A local political party committee may, however, disprove this presumption: (i) if it does not receive funds from other federal committees of that party, which are established, financed, maintained or controlled by any party unit; and (ii) if it does not make contributions in cooperation, consultation or concert with, or at the request or suggestion of, any other party unit or committee established, financed, maintained or controlled by another party unit within the state. *Id.* § 110.3(b)(3)(i), (ii); see also Advisory Opinion 1978-09 (Republican State Central Committee of Iowa).

1 per election contribution limit, since affiliated committees share the same limits on contributions  
2 received and made.<sup>52</sup> An unaffiliated local party committee which did not individually qualify as  
3 a multicandidate committee would be subject to the lower contribution limit for individuals and  
4 non-multicandidate PACs.

5 During the 2016 election cycle, the per-election limit for contributions to candidate  
6 committees from political party committees was \$5,000 and the limit for individuals and non-  
7 multicandidate committees was \$2,700.<sup>53</sup> Additional fact finding would be necessary in order to  
8 determine whether CCREC and West Charlotte Club were affiliated with RPOF for purposes of  
9 determining their contribution limits.<sup>54</sup> But based on the relatively small amounts disbursed by  
10 CCREC and West Charlotte Club, these allegations do not appear to warrant the use of further  
11 Commission resources. Additionally, as discussed above, it is unclear what, if any, funds this  
12 Charlotte County Club spent on federal campaign activity. Accordingly, the Commission  
13 dismisses the allegations that CCREC, West Charlotte Club, and Charlotte County Club made,  
14 and the Trump Committee accepted, excessive in-kind contributions in violation of 52 U.S.C.  
15 § 30116(a) and (f).<sup>55</sup> The Commission cautions CCREC, West Charlotte Club, the Trump  
16 Committee, and Corcoran about the prohibitions on making and receiving excessive  
17 contributions.

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<sup>52</sup> See 11 C.F.R. § 110.2(a)(1); Advisory Op. 1983-19 (AMAX) and Advisory Op. 1980-40 (Transamerica Corporation PAC). RPOF is a qualified Party Committee.

<sup>53</sup> See 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a); Price Index Adjustments for Contribution and Expenditure Limitations and Lobbyist Bundling Disclosure Threshold, 80 Fed. Reg 5750, 5752 (Feb. 3, 2015) (adjusting the contributions limits under 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a) for inflation up to \$2,700 per election for the 2016 cycle).

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., 11 C.F.R. § 110.3(b)(3).

<sup>55</sup> See *Heckler*, 470 U.S. at 821.

1 With respect to the contribution that CCREC made to the Mack Committee in 2012, the  
2 Mack Committee contends, and Commission reports confirm, that CCREC made a \$1,000  
3 contribution to the Mack Committee.<sup>56</sup> Because the facts suggest that CCREC was not a  
4 political committee at that time and would likely be subject to the \$2,500 individual contribution  
5 limit in effect in 2012, CCREC's contribution to the Mack Committee was not excessive. Thus,  
6 the Commission finds no reason to believe that CCREC and the Mack Committee violated  
7 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a) and (f) with respect to the 2012 contribution.<sup>57</sup>

8 **C. Disbursement of Non-Federal Funds for Federal Election Activity**

9 A local committee of a party committee, regardless of whether it qualifies as a "political  
10 committee," must finance federal election activity with funds subject to the limitations and  
11 source prohibitions of the Act through a specified account and meet recordkeeping and reporting  
12 requirements.<sup>58</sup> Federal election activity includes, *inter alia*, get-out-the-vote activity conducted  
13 in connection with an election in which a candidate for Federal office appears on the ballot and  
14 public communications that refer to a clearly identified candidate for federal office that promote,  
15 attack, support, or oppose ("PASO") a candidate for that office.<sup>59</sup> Get-out-the-vote activity  
16 includes encouraging or urging potential voters to vote.<sup>60</sup> A public communication includes any  
17 "outdoor advertising facility" and "any form of general public political advertising."<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The Mack Committee reported the contribution to the Commission, and CCREC reported it to the Charlotte County Supervisor of Elections.

<sup>57</sup> In any event, the statute of limitations for any possible violations associated with this contribution has run, barring initiation of any enforcement action.

<sup>58</sup> 11 C.F.R. §§ 102.5, 300.32(a)(2), 300.36.

<sup>59</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(20)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 100.24(a).

<sup>60</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 100.24(a)(3).

<sup>61</sup> *Id.* § 100.26; *see also* Explanation and Justification for the Regulations on Internet Communications, 71 Fed. Reg. 18,589, 18,593-94 (Apr. 12, 2006).

1 Here, CCREC and West Charlotte Club paid for activity that they describe as get-out-the-  
2 vote activity done in conjunction with the 2016 general election. But neither of those  
3 organizations maintained federal accounts, and there is no information indicating that they were  
4 using a reasonable accounting method to identify permissible funds. Therefore, CCREC and the  
5 West Charlotte Club failed to comply with the requirements of 52 U.S.C. § 30125(b)(1) and  
6 11 C.F.R. §§ 102.5, 300.32(a)(2), and 300.36(a). With respect to Charlotte County Club, it is  
7 unclear what, if any, funds this Club spent on federal campaign activity. But given the small  
8 amounts at issue, the Commission exercises its prosecutorial discretion and dismisses the  
9 allegations that CCREC, West Charlotte Club, and Charlotte County Club violated 52 U.S.C.  
10 § 30125(b)(1) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 102.5, 300.32(a)(2), and 300.36(a).<sup>62</sup> Further, to the extent that  
11 the Trump Committee and Corcoran as the Committee's agent received non-federal funds in  
12 violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30125(e), the Commission also dismisses those allegations.<sup>63</sup> The  
13 Commission cautions CCREC, West Charlotte Club, the Trump Committee, and Corcoran about  
14 the prohibitions on expending, disbursing, and receiving soft money in connection with a federal  
15 election.

16 **D. Remaining Respondents**

17 The Complaint alleges that after the Complainant informed RPOF of the potential  
18 violations identified in CCREC's internal audit, RPOF failed to take any action. Even if such  
19 allegation were true, it does not appear that RPOF's inaction constituted a violation under the  
20 Act. Accordingly, the Commission dismisses the matter as to RPOF.

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<sup>62</sup> See *Heckler*, 470 U.S. at 821.

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

1           Similarly, although the Complaint alleges that Folchi and Curtis were involved in the  
2   apparent violations by CCREC and West Charlotte Club, respectively, there are insufficient facts  
3   in the record to support this allegation of involvement by Folchi and Curtis, and thus the  
4   contention that they should be held individually liable is insufficiently justified. The  
5   Commission therefore dismisses the matter as to Folchi and Curtis.

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