

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY SYSTEM
DISMISSAL REPORT

MUR: 7619

Respondent: Vermont ETV, Inc. d/b/a
Vermont Public Broadcasting System¹

Complaint Receipt Date: June 21, 2019

Response Date: July 31, 2019

EPS Rating:

Alleged Statutory Regulatory Violations: **52 U.S.C. §§ 30104(f)(3)(B)(iii); 30116(a)(1)(A); 30121
11 C.F.R. §§ 110.13; 114.4(f); 110.20**

The Complaint alleges that Vermont Public Broadcasting System (“Vermont PBS”) excluded the Complainant² from its candidate debates because she was an independent candidate.³ Specifically, the Complaint alleges that Vermont PBS favored Democratic and Republican Party candidates over independent candidates, and by doing so made in-kind contributions to the Democratic and Republican Party candidates.⁴ In response, Vermont PBS states that the U.S. House of Representatives candidates’ debate that it aired complied with the Commission’s candidate debate staging regulations, using pre-established selection criteria that were in no way designed to

¹ Vermont PBS is the Public Broadcasting Service member network for the state of Vermont, and is owned by Vermont ETV, Inc., a domestic nonprofit corporation.

² Complainant Cris Ericson was a candidate to represent Vermont in the U.S. House in 2018. She lost in the November 6, 2018, general election with 3.3% of the vote. She describes herself as a “perennial political candidate” who has run for federal office every two years since 2004. Compl. at 1 (June 21, 2019).

³ Compl. at 2-3.

⁴ Compl. at 3. Complainant also alleges that because Vermont PBS is able to be viewed in Canada, it is possible that Vermont PBS received donations from Canadian citizens, and may have used those funds to finance televised debates, and by doing so may have facilitated foreign national contributions to the candidates that participated in the debates. *Id.* at 3-5. The Complainant also questions whether Canadian lawyers or lobbyists paid Vermont PBS specifically to exclude her from the 2018 debates, due to her stated opposition to foreign nationals voting in U.S. elections. *Id.* at 4-5. The Complaint does not provide any information supporting these claims.

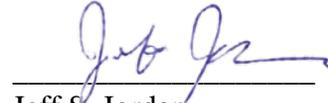
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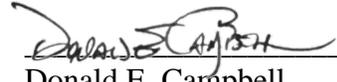
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