

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY SYSTEM

DISMISSAL REPORT

MUR: MUR 7749

Respondent: Romero for Senate
and Lynette Boniface, as treasurer
(the “Senate Committee”)
Friends of Paul J Romero, Jr
and Wade Kelley Barrett, as treasurer
(the “House Committee”)
Paul J. Romero, Jr.

Complaint Receipt Date: June 22, 2020

Response Date: July 31, 2020 (Romero and the House Committee);
August 4, 2020 (the Senate Committee)

**Alleged Statutory/ Regulatory Violations: 52 U.S.C. §§ 30101(2); 30102(f), (g); 30103(d); 30104(a), (b); 30120
11 C.F.R. §§ 101.1; 102.1; 104.3; 110.11**

23 The Complaint alleges that Romero has concealed the source of funding and expenditures
24 for his campaigns as a congressional candidate in Oregon in the 2016 primary, and Senate candidate
25 in Oregon in the 2020 primary.¹ The Complaint further alleges that Romero and the Senate
26 Committee have failed to file required disclosure reports; failed to include proper disclaimers on the
27 campaign website, Facebook page, and yard signs; and conducted fundraising for the Senate
28 campaign using a variety of committee names that are not registered or affiliated with Romero for
29 Senate.² The images attached to the Complaint show one yard sign that lacks a disclaimer, and two
30 Senate Committee signs with disclaimers stating that a separate Committee paid for them.³ The

¹ Compl. at 1-2 (June 22, 2020). Romero for Senate is registered with the FEC as the principal campaign committee for Romero's 2020 Senate campaign. Friends of Paul J. Romero, Jr. registered with the FEC as the principal campaign committee for Romero's 2016 campaign for Oregon's second Congressional District. Romero lost the 2020 Republican Senate primary, and lost the 2016 Republican primary for Oregon's second congressional district.

² *Id.* The Complaint alleges that the alternate unregistered committee names include: “Friends of Paul Romero,” “Friends of Paul Romero for Senate,” “Romero U.S. Senate” and “Paul Joseph Romero, Jr. for Congress, U.S. Senator, Oregon.” *Id.*

³ Compl. at 27, 30-31. The two Senate Committee signs with disclaimers state “Paid for by Friends of Paul Romero for Senate,” however this committee name is not registered with the Commission as either an authorized or unauthorized committee connected to Romero, the House Committee, or the Senate Committee, and no committee by this name appears to exist. The images attached to the Complaint also indicate that the campaign’s website at

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1 Response from Romero, on behalf of the House Committee and himself, asserts that neither of
 2 Romero's campaigns for the U.S. House in 2016 and 2018 exceeded \$5,000 in receipts.⁴ The
 3 Senate Committee's Response asserts that because it did not raise over \$5,000 before the filing date
 4 for the 2019 Year-End Report, it was not required to file a report for that period, and it reported this
 5 information in a Miscellaneous Report Form 99 filed with the FEC at that time.⁵ The Senate
 6 Committee's Response further states that it has since disclosed all contributions and disbursements
 7 through June 30, 2020.⁶

8 Based on its experience and expertise, the Commission has established an Enforcement
 9 Priority System using formal, pre-determined scoring criteria to allocate agency resources and
 10 assess whether particular matters warrant further administrative enforcement proceedings. These
 11 criteria include (1) the gravity of the alleged violation, taking into account both the type of activity
 12 and the amount in violation; (2) the apparent impact the alleged violation may have had on the
 13 electoral process; (3) the complexity of the legal issues raised in the matter; and (4) recent trends in
 14 potential violations and other developments in the law. This matter is rated as low priority for

www.romero4oregon.com did not contain a sufficient disclaimer, Compl. at 16-25. A recent review of that website shows that it now bears a disclaimer reading "Paid for by Friends of Romero," which is not the registered name of either the House or Senate Committees, but bears a strong similarity to the name of the House Committee. ROMERO FOR CONGRESS <https://www.romero4oregon.com> (last visited November 3, 2020). Similarly, the Senate Committee's website lists a mailing address instructing mail to be sent to Friends of Paul J Romero, Jr., which is the name of the House Committee. CONTACT | ROMERO FOR CONGRESS <https://www.romero4oregon.com/contact> (last visited November 3, 2020).

⁴ Romero Resp. at 1 (July 31, 2020). The Romero Response specifies that in 2016 the total raised was approximately \$3,500 and in 2018 the total was less than \$3,000. *Id.* Commission records do not indicate any filings by Romero or the House Committee for the 2018 election cycle, however information from the Oregon Secretary of State confirms Romero lost the 2018 Republican primary for Oregon's second congressional district.

<https://sos.oregon.gov/elections/Documents/results/May-2018-results.pdf> (last visited November 3, 2020). The Response does not address the amount of disbursements made by the House Committee in 2016 or 2018.

⁵ Senate Committee Resp. at 1 (August 4, 2020).

⁶ *Id.* The Commission's records show that the Senate Committee filed a Form 99 for the 2020 April Quarterly period (*see* Romero for Senate Miscellaneous Report (Form 99) (April 16, 2020), and a pre-primary report disclosing receipts and disbursements between August 30, 2019 and April 29, 2020 (*see* Romero for Senate 2020 Pre-Primary Report, May 7, 2020).

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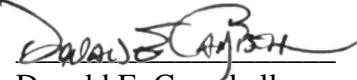
1 Commission action after application of these pre-established criteria. Given that low rating, the
2 Senate Committee's Miscellaneous Report stating that it had not crossed the reporting threshold, the
3 subsequent campaign finance reports filed by the Respondents, and likely technical nature of the
4 disclaimer violations, we recommend that the Commission dismiss the Complaint consistent with
5 the Commission's prosecutorial discretion to determine the proper ordering of its priorities and use
6 of agency resources.⁷ We also recommend that the Commission close the file as to all Respondents,
7 remind the Respondents of the requirements for sufficient and accurate disclaimers, and send the
8 appropriate letters.

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15 Lisa J. Stevenson
16 Acting General Counsel

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20 Charles Kitcher
21 Acting Associate General Counsel

22
23
24 BY: 
25 Stephen Gura
Deputy Associate General Counsel

26
27
28
29 Jeff S. Jordan
30 Assistant General Counsel

31
32
33
34 
35 Donald E. Campbell
36 Attorney

⁷ *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821, 831-32 (1985).