

## FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION Washington, DC 20463

June 7, 2022

# VIA ELECTRONIC AND CERTIFIED MAIL RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

dan@political.law

Dan Backer, Esq.
Patriots of America PAC
441 North Lee Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314

RE: MUR 7810

Karyn Kay Griffin

Shout Out America PAC and

Mike McCauley in his official capacity as

treasurer

Dear Mr. Backer:

On May 24, 2022, the Federal Election Commission reviewed the allegations in your complaint dated October 1, 2020, and on the basis of the information provided in your complaint, and information provided by the Respondents, it dismissed as a matter of prosecutorial discretion the allegation that Shout Out America PAC and Mike McCauley in his official capacity as treasurer (the "Committee") failed to register as a political committee or failed to include disclaimers on its communications in violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30103(a), 30120(a) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 102.1(d), 110.11. The Commission also found no reason to believe that the Committee failed to exercise best efforts to obtain contributors' identification information in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30102(i) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.7. The Commission further found no reason to believe that Karyn Kay Griffin and the Committee solicited prohibited corporate contributions in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30118 and 11 C.F.R. § 114.2. Accordingly, the Commission closed the file in 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 basis for the Commission's findings, is enclosed.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, allows a complainant to seek judicial review of the Commission's dismissal of this action. See 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(8).

MUR 7810 Dan Backer Page 2

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

Sincerely,

Lisa J. Stevenson Acting General Counsel

Ana J. Pena-Wallace

BY: Ana J. Peña-Wallace Assistant General Counsel

Enclosure Factual and Legal Analysis

1 2 3	FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS		
4			
5 6 7	RESPONDENTS:	Karyn Kay Griffin, Executive Director Shout Out America PAC and Mike McCauley in his official capacity as treasurer  MUR 7810	
8 9	I. INTRODUC	I. INTRODUCTION	
10 11	This matter w	as generated by a complaint filed with the Federal Election Commission	
12	(the "Commission") alleging Shout Out America PAC ("Shout Out") failed to register with the		
13	Commission despite operating a website that solicited funds to support the reelection of Donald		
14	J. Trump for President. 1 It further alleges that Shout Out's website, and a printed		
15	communication accessible through its website, failed to include disclaimers or best efforts		
16	language requesting contributor identification information, that it solicited prohibited corporate		
17	contributions, and that Shout Out's director, Karyn Kay Griffin, committed wire fraud by		
18	soliciting funds based on fraudulent misrepresentations. <sup>2</sup>		
19	In their Response, Shout Out and Griffin assert that Shout Out registered as a nonfederal		
20	political committee with the State of New Mexico in August 2020. <sup>3</sup> Shout Out registered as an		
21	independent expenditure-only political committee ("IEOPC") with the Commission shortly after		
22	being notified of the Complaint. Respondents assert that Shout Out did not make \$1,000 in		
23	federal expenditures until mid-September, and that its registration with the Commission was only		
24	15 days late. <sup>4</sup> Further, Respondents assert that Shout Out filed its first disclosure report in a		
25	timely fashion. <sup>5</sup> Resp	pondents deny the remaining allegations. <sup>6</sup>	
	Compl. at 5-6 (C	Det. 1, 2020).	
	<sup>2</sup> <i>Id.</i> at 7-13.		
	Resp. at 2 (Oct. 2)	23, 2020).	

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Id.* 

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 2-4.

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, et al.) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 2 of 10

- 1 As discussed in further detail below, the Commission exercises its prosecutorial 2 discretion and dismisses the allegations that Shout Out failed to register with the Commission
- 3 and failed to include proper disclaimers in compliance with the Federal Election Campaign Act
- 4 of 1971, as amended (the "Act"), and Commission regulations. The Commission also finds no
- 5 reason to believe that Shout Out failed to follow the regulation's "best efforts" provisions or that
- 6 Shout Out or Griffin solicited prohibited contributions.<sup>8</sup>

## II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

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- 8 Shout Out was founded by Karyn Kay Griffin and registered with the State of New
- 9 Mexico as a nonfederal political committee on August 28, 2020. After the filing of the
- 10 Complaint in this matter, Shout Out registered with the Commission as an IEOPC on October 14,
- 11 2020. 10 It filed its first disclosure report with the Commission on October 15, 2020. 11 During
- the 2020 election cycle, Shout Out disclosed \$6,874.06 in receipts (consisting of \$624.06 in
- unitemized contributions and \$6,250 in itemized contributions from three individuals) and
- \$6,289.99 in disbursements, all of which were issued for operating expenditures. 12 Shout Out
- has had no activity in 2021 or to date in 2022, and only has \$584.07 in cash on hand. 13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> See Heckler v. Chaney, 470 U.S. 821 (1985).

The Complaint's allegation that Griffin committed wire fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1343, by allegedly misrepresenting Shout Out's association with Go Fas Racing on its website, is not within the Commission's jurisdiction. Therefore, the Commission makes no findings regarding the alleged activity.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> See Resp. at 2 and Ex. 1. According to Respondents, Shout Out acted on the advice of previous counsel when it registered with New Mexico. *Id.* at 2.

See Shout Out America PAC, Statement of Organization (Oct. 14, 2020); Compl. at 1. See also Shout Out America, A New Political Action Committee, Overview, available at <a href="https://shoutoutamericapac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Shout-Out-America-PAC-One-Sheet-August-2020.pdf">https://shoutoutamericapac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Shout-Out-America-PAC-One-Sheet-August-2020.pdf</a> (last accessed July 21, 2020) (listing Griffin as Executive Director).

Shout Out America PAC, 2020 October Quarterly Report (Oct. 15, 2020).

See Shout Out America PAC, 2019-2020 Financial Summary Page, FEC.gov (last accessed July 21, 2021).

See Shout Out America PAC, 2021-2022 Financial Summary Page, FEC.gov (last accessed May 24, 2022). Griffin registered Shout Out with the State of New Mexico as an independent expenditure political committee on August 28, 2020 and filed its first state report on September 13, 2020, disclosing one \$500 contribution that it

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 3 of 10

1 According to the Respondents, Griffin previously served as a board member and co-chair 2 of Patriots of America PAC, the Complainant in this matter, and that the Complaint was "a 3 tactical and retaliatory filing" made "in an attempt to silence" Shout Out and harass Griffin. 14 4 Griffin explains that while she was associated with Patriots of America PAC, she raised \$1 million for the committee and also helped negotiate a contract with Go Fas Racing. <sup>15</sup> Griffin 5 6 states that she left Patriots of America PAC following a disagreement with the Complainant after she "attempted to prevent him from filing improper FEC reports" for the PAC. 16 She further 7 8 explains that after departing Patriots of America PAC, she began negotiations with the owner of 9 Go Fas Racing on behalf of Shout Out in order to run Trump 2020 ads on its #32 stock car, but the parties never entered into a contract. 17 It appears that Go Fas Racing car #32 ran in a number 10 11 of races wrapped with a Trump 2020 message, but that the advertisement was paid for by Patriots of America PAC.<sup>18</sup> 12

received on September 4, 2020. See State of New Mexico Committee Registration Form (Aug. 28, 2020) and Shout Out America PAC, 2020 First General Report, New Mexico Office of the Sec. of State (Sept. 13, 2020). For the 2020 election cycle, it disclosed \$6,975 in contributions and \$6,870.06 in expenditures on its state reports, which is \$101 in additional receipts and \$580 in additional disbursements than what was disclosed on its Commission filings; it has disclosed no state activity in 2021. See Shout Out America PAC filings, New Mexico Secretary of State, <a href="https://login.cfis.sos.state">https://login.cfis.sos.state</a> (search "Shout Out America PAC").

Resp. at 4. Patriots of America PAC is a hybrid PAC registered with the Commission. *See* Patriots of America PAC, Statement of Organization and attached Miscellaneous Text (Feb. 18, 2020) (registering as an IEPOC); Statement of Organization and attached Miscellaneous Text (Apr. 14, 2020) (amending statement to indicate it would establish a separate non-contribution account, allowing it to operate as a hybrid political committee).

Resp. at 1, 4. Go Fas Racing is a stock car racing team that currently races car #32 in the NASCAR Cup Series. See <a href="https://gofasracing.com/">https://gofasracing.com/</a>; @GoFASRAcing32, TWITTER, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://gofasracing.com/</a>; @GoFASRAcing32, TWITTER, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://gofasracing.com/</a>; @GoFASRAcing32, TWITTER, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://gofasracing.com/</a>; @GoFASRAcing32, TWITTER, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://gofasracing.com/</a>; @GoFASRAcing32, TWITTER, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, <a href="https://cracer.com/2020/10/22/go-fas-to-run-part-time-in-2021/">https://racer.com/2020/10/22/go-fas-to-run-part-time-in-2021/</a>; Go Fas Racing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/GoFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, Go Fas Racing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, Go Fas Racing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, Go Fas Racing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, Go Fas Racing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in the @NASCAR Cup Series); Kelly Crandall, Go FasRacing, WIKIPEDIA, <a href="https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32">https://twitter.com/goFasRacing32</a> (describing itself as @FordPerformance team in t

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Resp. at 4.

<sup>17</sup> Id. (explaining that Shout Out was unable to raise sufficient funds to meet the terms of the contract).

See Patriots for America PAC Website, <a href="https://patriotsofamericapac.org/">https://patriotsofamericapac.org/</a> (displaying car #32 wrapped with a Trump 2020 message). Archived pages of the Go Fas Racing team reveals that Shout Out America PAC was never one if its sponsors, but that Patriots of America PAC was. See, e.g., <a href="https://gofasracing.com/partner">https://gofasracing.com/partner</a> (current page); <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20200930185309/https://gofasracing.com/partner">https://web.archive.org/web/20200930185309/https://gofasracing.com/partner</a> (Sept. 30, 2020 snapshot).

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 4 of 10

1	Shout Out operated a website at www.shoutoutamericapac.org, which the Complaint	
2	alleges failed to display disclaimers. 19 Screenshots attached to the Complaint show that a	
3	disclaimer appears on its homepage, while the "Learn More," "Donate," and payment pages did	
4	not include disclaimers. <sup>20</sup> A PDF document accessible through the site's "Learn More" button	
5	also did not display a full disclaimer. <sup>21</sup> The disclaimer on the homepage states "Paid for by	
6	Shout Out America PAC, Not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee,	
7	ShoutOutAmericaPAC.org."22 The current version of Shout Out's website now displays the	
8	disclaimer on each of its active pages and includes "best efforts" language on its donation page;	
9	Respondents indicate that the disclaimers and "best efforts" language were added after receipt of	
10	the Complaint. <sup>23</sup>	
11	III. LEGAL ANALYSIS	
12	The Complaint alleges that Shout Out failed to register as a political committee with the	
13	Commission, failed to include disclaimers on its website and on a printed communication	
14	accessible through the website, failed to include best efforts language on the donation page of its	
15	website, and improperly solicited corporate contributions. <sup>24</sup>	
16	A. Failure to Register as a Political Committee	
17	The Act and Commission regulations define a "political committee" as "any committee,	
18	club, association, or other group of persons which receives contributions aggregating in excess of	
19	\$1,000 during a calendar year or which makes expenditures aggregating in excess of \$1,000	

<sup>19</sup> See infra Sec. III.B (discussing alleged disclaimer violations).

Compl. at Exs. B, D, E, and F.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at Ex. D.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at Ex. B.

See Resp. at 2-3; <a href="https://shoutoutamericapac.org/">https://shoutoutamericapac.org/</a> and <a href="https://shoutoutamericapac.org/donate/">https://shoutoutamericapac.org/donate/</a>; see infra Sec. III.C (discussing alleged best efforts violation).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Compl. at 1, 7-11.

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 5 of 10

- during a calendar year."<sup>25</sup> Political committees are required to register with the Commission by
- 2 filing a statement of organization with the Commission no later than 10 days after designation,
- 3 meet organizational and recordkeeping requirements, and file periodic disclosure reports. <sup>26</sup>
- 4 Shout Out acknowledges that it should have registered with the Commission at an earlier
- 5 point. It registered with the State of New Mexico on August 28, 2020, but did not register with
- 6 the Commission until October 14, 2020, after receipt of the Complaint in this matter.<sup>27</sup>
- 7 Respondents concede that Shout Out's registration was untimely because it passed the Act's
- 8 \$1,000 threshold for political committee status on September 19, 2020.<sup>28</sup> Based on that date,
- 9 Shout Out's Statement of Organization was due on September 29, 2020, but was filed 15 days
- 10 late.
- We have no information that Shout Out's registration was triggered at an earlier date.
- 12 The Complaint alleges, however, that the website was likely designed at a considerable cost, and
- because the website URL was obtained on July 24, 2020, Shout Out may have triggered political
- 14 committee status around that date.<sup>29</sup> Whether Shout Out's registration requirement was triggered
- around July 24 or September 19 would not change the fact that the 2020 October Quarterly
- Report was its first disclosure report due to the Commission and was timely filed.<sup>30</sup> Based on
- 17 the short period involved with Shout Out's untimely registration and the fact that it still timely
- 18 filed its initial disclosure report, the Commission dismisses as a matter of prosecutorial discretion

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(4)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 100.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> See 52 U.S.C. §§ 30102, 30103, 30104.

Resp. at 2 and Ex. 1; Shout Out America PAC, Statement of Organization (Oct. 14, 2020).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Resp. at 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Compl. 6 and Ex. C.

<sup>30</sup> See Shout Out America PAC, 2020 October Quarterly Report (Oct. 15, 2020).

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 6 of 10

- the allegation that Shout Out violated 52 U.S.C. § 30103(a) and 11 C.F.R. § 102.1(d) by filing a
- 2 late registration.

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#### **B.** Failure to Include Disclaimers

All public communications made by a political committee and all public communications 4 5 made by any person that expressly advocate the election or defeat of a clearly identified 6 candidate are required to include a disclaimer as set forth in the Act and Commission 7 regulations.<sup>31</sup> Disclaimers are required on all Internet websites of a political committee available to the general public. 32 If the communication, including any solicitation, is not authorized by a 8 9 candidate, authorized committee of a candidate, or an agent of either, the disclaimer must clearly 10 state the full name and permanent street address, telephone number, or World Wide Web address 11 of the person who paid for the communication, and that the communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.<sup>33</sup> In addition, disclaimers in printed materials must be 12 presented in a clear and conspicuous matter and meet specific requirements, such as being of 13 14 sufficient type size to be clearly readable and being placed in a printed box set apart from the other parts of the communication.<sup>34</sup> 15

Shout Out's website included a full disclaimer on its homepage that stated that it was "Paid for by Shout Out America PAC," "Not Authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee," and listed the PAC's website address, ShoutOutAmericaPAC.org.<sup>35</sup> At the time of the Complaint, the donation page, which sought \$2 million in contributions to help "accomplish [Shout Out's] mission" in reelecting President Trump, and the payment page on the site did not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30120(a); 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(a)(1), (a)(2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 110.11(a)(1).

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* § 110.11(b)(3).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> *Id.* § 110.11(c)(2).

Compl. at Ex. B.

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, et al.) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 7 of 10

- 1 contain disclaimers.<sup>36</sup> However, the allegations in the Complaint specifically point to a
- 2 document entitled "Shout Out America, A New Political Action Committee, Overview"
- 3 ("Overview Document"), which consisted of a separate PDF document that was accessible and
- 4 could be downloaded through the "Learn More" button on the website's homepage.<sup>37</sup> The
- 5 Overview Document expressly advocated the reelection of President Trump and solicited
- 6 contributions to meet a \$2 million fundraising goal to pay for advertising on Go Fas Racing's
- fully wrapped car #32, voter registration, marketing, event promotion, and merchandise.<sup>38</sup> While
- 8 the last page of the document identifies Shout Out and provides the website address
- 9 (ShoutOutAmericaPAC.org), it does not specifically state who paid for the communication,
- whether it was authorized by a candidate, or contain a printed box listing any of that information,
- as required by the Act and Commission regulations.
- Since the date of the Complaint, Shout Out has removed the "Learn More" button from
- its site, thereby effectively removing access to the Overview Document through the website
- homepage, and has further added full disclaimers on each remaining active page of the website.<sup>39</sup>
- 15 However, the Overview Document still remains accessible through a direct hyperlink and can be
- downloaded as a separate printed communication.<sup>40</sup>
- While a disclaimer was required on the Overview Document, because the document
- 18 contained some identifying information and appeared on a website that did include a full
- disclaimer on its homepage, it is unlikely that the general public would have been misled as to

Id. at Ex. E and F.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* at 4 and Ex. D.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> *Id.* at Ex. D.

See Resp. at 2; see also <a href="https://shoutoutamericapac.org/">https://shoutoutamericapac.org/</a> (last accessed July 21, 2021).

Compl. at 4; <a href="https://shoutoutamericapac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Shout-Out-America-PAC-One-Sheet-August-2020.pdf">https://shoutoutamericapac.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Shout-Out-America-PAC-One-Sheet-August-2020.pdf</a> (last accessed July 21, 2021).

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, et al.) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 8 of 10

- 1 who was responsible for the communication. Accordingly, the Commission dismisses as a
- 2 matter of prosecutorial discretion the allegation that Shout Out violated 52 U.S.C. § 30120(a)
- 3 and 11 C.F.R. § 110.11.<sup>41</sup>

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## C. Use of Best Efforts

5 The Complaint alleges that because the website failed to request contributor information

- 6 on the donation page, Shout Out failed to exercise best efforts to obtain contributors'
- 7 identification information in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30102(i) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.7(b)(1)(i-
- 8 ii).<sup>42</sup> The Act requires authorized committees to identify persons who make a contribution in
- 9 excess of \$200 within the calendar year. 43 "Identification" means a person's full name, mailing
- address, occupation, and the name of their employer.<sup>44</sup> Under the Act's best efforts provision,
- when a treasurer of a political committee shows that best efforts have been used to obtain,
- maintain, and submit the information required by the Act, any report submitted by the committee
- will be considered to be in compliance with the Act. 45 The Commission has further explained
- that "the best efforts provision is an affirmative defense that a respondent must establish." 46
- 15 Thus, while a committee may establish that it has exercised best efforts by including language
- requesting a contributor's name, address, occupation and other identifying information in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> *Heckler*, 470 U.S. 821 (1985).

<sup>42</sup> Compl. at 8-9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(3)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 104.3(a)(4).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(13); 11 C.F.R. § 100.12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30102(i); see also 11 C.F.R. § 104.7(a).

See, e.g., F&LA at 8-9, MURs 7112 and 7115 (AJ Kern for Congress, et al.); F&LA at 5, MUR 7043 (Put Alaska First); see also Statement of Policy Regarding Treasurers' Best Efforts to Obtain, Maintain, and Submit Information as Required by the Federal Election Campaign Act, 72 Fed. Reg. 31,438, 31,440 (June 7, 2007) ("The best efforts standard is an affirmative defense and the burden rests with the political committee and its treasurer to present evidence sufficient to demonstrate that best efforts were made.").

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 9 of 10

- 1 written solicitations, a committee's failure to do so is not a violation where the committee
- 2 otherwise complied with the reporting requirements of the Act.<sup>47</sup>
- 3 Here, the Complaint does not allege that Shout Out failed to include contributor
- 4 identification information on its disclosure reports, and there is no available information
- 5 indicating that Shout Out reported inaccurate information. 48 Respondents acknowledge that
- 6 prior to receipt of the Complaint, the website donation page did not include best efforts language
- 7 seeking contributor identification information, but that such language has since been added.<sup>49</sup>
- 8 Nevertheless, simply not including such language on its original solicitation does not indicate
- 9 that Shout Out violated the best efforts provision. Accordingly, the Commission finds no reason
- to believe that Shout Out violated 52 U.S.C. § 30102(i) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.7.

## **D.** Solicitation of Corporate Contributions

The Complaint alleges that Shout Out may have improperly solicited corporate contributions based in part that at the time of the Complaint there was no information regarding whether it was operating as an IEOPC or a hybrid PAC.<sup>50</sup> Under the Act, corporations are prohibited from making contributions in connection with a federal election and a candidate, political committee, or other person is prohibited from knowingly accepting or receiving such prohibited contributions.<sup>51</sup> However, an IEOPC is permitted to accept unlimited contributions as

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See 11 C.F.R. § 104.7(b)(1)(i)(A) (providing examples of acceptable best efforts statements).

Shout Out disclosed itemized contributions from three individuals and appears to have listed all of their identification information. *See* Shout Out America PAC, Amended 2020 October Quarterly Report at 6 (Oct. 17, 2020).

<sup>49</sup> Resp. at 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Compl. at 9-11.

<sup>52</sup> U.S.C. § 30118; 11 C.F.R. § 114.2(b), (d).<sup>52</sup> See Advisory Opinion 2010-11 (Commonsense Ten) (corporations and labor organizations may contribute without limit to political committees that make only independent expenditures); see also Citizens United v. FEC, 130 S. Ct. 876, 913 (2010) (corporate-funded independent expenditures are constitutionally protected speech); SpeechNow.org v. FEC, 599 F.3d 686, 692-96 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (en banc) (individuals may contribute without limit to political committees that make only independent expenditures).

MUR 7810 (Shout Out America PAC, *et al.*) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 10 of 10

- well as corporate contributions; 52 a hybrid political committee, which makes both independent
- 2 expenditures and direct contributions, can also accept unlimited and corporate contributions but
- 3 must maintain a separate non-contribution account for the purpose of making independent
- 4 expenditures and a separate contribution account that is subject to the Act's amount and source
- 5 limitations from which to make contributions to federal candidates.<sup>53</sup> Since the date of the
- 6 Complaint, Shout Out has registered with the Commission as an IEOPC.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, because it
- 7 was permitted to solicit and accept corporate contributions, the Commission finds no reason to
- 8 believe that Shout Out violated the prohibition against accepting such contributions in the Act
- 9 and Commission's regulations at 52 U.S.C. § 30118 and 11 C.F.R. § 114.2.<sup>55</sup>

See Advisory Opinion 2010-11 (Commonsense Ten) (corporations and labor organizations may contribute without limit to political committees that make only independent expenditures); see also Citizens United v. FEC, 130 S. Ct. 876, 913 (2010) (corporate-funded independent expenditures are constitutionally protected speech); SpeechNow.org v. FEC, 599 F.3d 686, 692-96 (D.C. Cir. 2010) (en banc) (individuals may contribute without limit to political committees that make only independent expenditures).

See Types of nonconnected PACs at <a href="https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/registering-pac/types-nonconnected-pacs/">https://www.fec.gov/help-candidates-and-committees/registering-pac/types-nonconnected-pacs/</a>). The Commission issued guidance on the formation and operation of hybrid political committees following its agreement to a stipulated order and consent judgment in Carey v. FEC, Civ. No. 11-259-RMC (D.D.C. 2011), in which a non-connected committee sought to solicit and accept unlimited contributions in a separate bank account to make independent expenditures. See Press Release, FEC Statement on Carey v. FEC, Reporting Guidance for Political Committees that Maintain a Non-Contribution Account (Oct. 5, 2011) (requiring non-connected committees that make independent expenditures to maintain a separate "contribution" account to be able to make contributions to federal candidates from receipts that are subject to the Act's limitations and source prohibitions).

See Shout Out America PAC, Statement of Organization and attached Miscellaneous Text (Oct. 14, 2020) (stating that it intends to raise funds in unlimited amounts but would not use those funds to make contributions, whether direct, in-kind-or via coordinated communications, to federal candidates or committees).

Despite being permitted to accept such contributions, based on its disclosure reports filed with the Commission, Shout Out does not appear to have accepted any corporate contributions. *See* Shout Out America PAC, Amended 2020 October Quarterly Report (Oct. 17, 2020) (disclosing only three itemized contributions from individuals).