



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

April 14, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

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Chrissie Hastie, Treasurer
Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam
Brown for Nevada
PO Box 750844
Las Vegas, NV 89136

RE: MUR 8183
Sam Brown; Sam Brown PAC f/k/a
Sam Brown for Nevada and
Chrissie Hastie in her official
capacity as treasurer

Dear Ms. Hastie,

On October 30, 2025, the Federal Election Commission notified Sam Brown PAC and you, in your official capacity as treasurer, 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 the information you provided, on March 11, 2025, the Commission voted to dismiss the allegations in the Complaint that Sam Brown, Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada and Chrissie Hastie in her official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) by knowingly accepting excessive contributions. The Commission voted to close the file effective March 14, 2025. Any applicable Factual and Legal Analysis or Statements of Reasons available at the time of this letter’s transmittal are enclosed.

Documents related to the case will be placed on the public record today. *See* Disclosure of Certain Documents in Enforcement and Other Matters, 81 Fed. Reg. 50,702 (Aug. 2, 2016).

If you have any questions, please contact Constantine Soupios who is assigned to this matter, at (202) 694-1650.

Sincerely,

Aaron Rabinowitz

Aaron Rabinowitz
Assistant General Counsel

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

RESPONDENTS: Sam Brown
Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada
and Chrissie Hastie, in her official capacity
as treasurer (terminated)¹
Duty First PAC and Chrissie Hastie in her
official capacity as treasurer²

MUR 8183

1. INTRODUCTION

This matter arises from a Complaint alleging that Sam Brown, a candidate for U.S. from Nevada in 2022, Sam Brown PAC, formerly Sam Brown for Nevada, his 2022 al campaign committee, and Duty First PAC, a nonconnected committee formed by , retired campaign debt in violation of the debt disclosure requirements and contribution of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”) and the ision’s regulations.

As set forth below, the available information does not indicate that Respondents violated
or Commission regulations in this matter and therefore the Commission dismisses the
actions and closes the file.

¹ On March 6, 2023, prior to the filing of this Complaint, the Commission’s Reports Analysis Division approved Sam Brown PAC’s termination. *See* Termination Report (Feb. 16, 2023).

² At the time of the initial portion of the activity that is the subject of the Complaint, the Duty First PAC treasurer was Paul Kilgore. Duty First PAC Statement of Organization (July 5, 2022). The current treasurer is Christie Hastie. Duty First PAC Amended Statement of Organization (May 10, 2023).

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1 **II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

2 Sam Brown was a candidate for U.S. Senate in 2022 in Nevada.³ His principal
 3 campaign committee was Sam Brown for Nevada.⁴ After Brown lost the primary election on
 4 June 14, 2022,⁵ Sam Brown for Nevada disclosed \$344,432.59 in debt.⁶ On July 5, 2022, Sam
 5 Brown for Nevada was listed as an affiliated committee on the Statement of Organization of
 6 Duty First PAC,⁷ a non-connected committee formed by Brown.⁸ On August 18, 2022, Sam
 7 Brown for Nevada converted to a non-connected committee and changed its name to Sam Brown
 8 PAC.⁹

9 On October 14, 2022, Sam Brown PAC filed a Termination Report covering the period
 10 July 1 through September 30, 2022, disclosing in a Miscellaneous Text entry that certain vendor
 11 debts had been forgiven, that “[a]ll remaining debt accumulated by Sam Brown PAC has been
 12 assumed by Duty First PAC (C00819888),” and disclosing no debt.¹⁰ The Commission’s
 13 Reports Analysis Division (“RAD”) sent Sam Brown PAC a Request for Additional Information
 14 (“RFAI”) questioning the disclosure of debts that had been forgiven or settled.¹¹ Sam Brown
 15 PAC filed an amended Termination Report on February 16, 2023, with a revised Miscellaneous

³ Sam Brown, Statement of Candidacy (July 7, 2021).

⁴ Sam Brown for Nevada, Statement of Organization (July 7, 2021). Brown was a candidate for U.S. Senate in Nevada again in 2024, for which he designated a new principal campaign committee. Sam Brown, Statement of Candidacy (July. 10, 2023); Sam Brown for Nevada, Statement of Organization (July 10, 2023).

⁵ Nevada Secretary of State, Primary Election Results 2022, <https://www.nvsos.gov/silverstate2022pri/USSenate//> (last visited Feb. 3, 2025).

⁶ Sam Brown for Nevada, 2022 July Quarterly Report at 2 (July 15, 2022).

⁷ Duty First PAC, Statement of Organization at 3 (July 5, 2022). \

⁸ Compl. at 3 (Oct. 25, 2023); Resp. of Sam Brown, Sam Brown PAC and Duty First PAC (“Resp.”) at 2 (Dec. 11, 2023).

⁹ Sam Brown PAC, Statement of Organization at 1-3 (Aug. 18, 2022).

¹⁰ Sam Brown PAC, Termination Report at 2, 5 (Oct. 14, 2022).

¹¹ Sam Brown PAC, RFAI at 1 (Nov. 13, 2022).

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1 Text entry listing 17 vendors owed debts by Sam Brown PAC that were being assumed by Duty

2 First PAC.¹² RAD granted Sam Brown PAC's termination request on March 6, 2023.¹³

3 Duty First PAC filed its 2022 October Quarterly Report on October 14, 2022, stating in a

4 Miscellaneous Text entry that "All remaining debt accumulated by Sam Brown PAC . . . has

5 been assumed by Duty First PAC . . ." and disclosing debts of \$199,115.88 on Schedule D.¹⁴ On

6 February 16, 2023, Duty First PAC amended its October Quarterly Report listing the same 17

7 vendors owed debts by Sam Brown PAC that were being assumed by Duty First PAC and

8 disclosing total debts of \$232,707.26.¹⁵

9 According to the Complaint, from Duty First PAC's registration with the Commission

10 until mid-2023, it received \$91,500 in contributions and used \$55,000 to repay debt from

11 Brown's 2022 Senate campaign.¹⁶ Duty First PAC's overall activity from inception to

12 November 25, 2024, includes receipts of \$672,293.39 and disbursements of \$440,403.22 and it

13 currently discloses \$240,470.78 in debt.¹⁷ In addition, on November 17, 2023, Duty First PAC

14 amended its Statement of Organization to identify itself as a Leadership PAC sponsored by Sam

15 Brown.¹⁸

¹² Sam Brown PAC, Amended Report (Feb. 16, 2023) (not labeled as a Termination Report but covering the same period of July 1 to October 30, 2022). Sam Brown PAC filed a new Termination Report on February 16, 2023, covering the period January 1 through March 31, 2023, disclosing no activity.

¹³ Sam Brown PAC, Termination Approval (Mar. 6, 2023).

¹⁴ Duty First PAC, 2022 October Quarterly Report at 2, 6 (Oct. 14, 2022).

¹⁵ Duty First PAC, Amended 2022 October Quarterly Report at 2, 6 (Feb. 16, 2023).

¹⁶ Compl. at 3. Duty First PAC's disclosure reports largely confirm this activity, though the contributions disclosed at the time of the Complaint appears to be \$91,226.34. See Duty First PAC, Amended 2022 Year-End Report at 3 (May 5, 2023); Duty First PAC, Amended 2023 Mid-Year Report at 3 (Oct. 3, 2023).

¹⁷ Duty First PAC, 2024 30-Day Post-General Report at 2-4 (Dec. 5, 2024).

¹⁸ Duty First PAC, Amended Statement of Organization at 2, 6 (Nov. 17, 2023).

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1 The Complaint alleges that Duty First PAC can only accept funds from contributors for
 2 debt retirement that do not exceed Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada's original 2022
 3 primary election contribution limit of \$2,900, yet at least ten contributors gave more than a
 4 combined \$2,900 to Duty First PAC and Brown's 2022 campaign.¹⁹ The Complaint further
 5 alleges Duty First PAC failed to notify contributors that their contributions would be used to pay
 6 down debt accumulated in Brown's prior campaign.²⁰

7 The Response from Sam Brown, Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada, and
 8 Duty First PAC submits that their activities did not violate the Act. Respondents assert that the
 9 conversion of Sam Brown for Nevada into Sam Brown PAC, a nonconnected committee
 10 affiliated with Duty First PAC was permitted under the Act and as stated in the Commission's
 11 Campaign Guide for Congressional Candidates and Committees, "[a]fter the conversion, the
 12 committee remains responsible for resolving any outstanding obligations, such as debts and
 13 unrefunded impermissible contributions."²¹ Moreover, the Response states that the assumption
 14 of Sam Brown PAC's debt by Duty First PAC, an affiliated committee, is not prohibited by the
 15 Act or Commission's regulations.²² Finally, Respondents submit that a contribution to Brown's
 16 2022 Primary election does not become a limitation on contributions to Duty First PAC, which
 17 was not obligated to provide a contributor with detailed notice of its intended use of
 18 contributions.²³

¹⁹ Compl. at 4-5, Ex. A.

²⁰ *Id.* at 4-6.

²¹ Resp. at 4 (*quoting* FEC Campaign Guide for Congressional Candidates and Committees at 138 (Oct. 2021)).

²² Resp. at 4. The Response states that the regulations only specifically address an authorized committee that qualifies as a terminating committee assigning debts to another authorized committee of the same candidate. *Id.*; *see* 11 C.F.R. § 116.2(c)(3).

²³ Resp. at 6.

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1 **III. LEGAL ANALYSIS**

2 During the 2022 election cycle, the Act and Commission regulations limited an
 3 authorized committee to accepting a total of \$2,900 per election from any individual.²⁴
 4 Nonconnected committees are limited to accepting a total of \$5,000 from individuals per
 5 calendar year.²⁵ Candidates and political committees are prohibited from knowingly accepting
 6 excessive contributions.²⁶

7 The Complaint identifies 10 contributors who contributed more than a combined \$2,900
 8 to Brown's 2022 campaign and Duty First PAC,²⁷ which the Complaint alleges resulted in a total
 9 of \$55,500 in excessive contributions.²⁸

10 However, none of the actions taken by Respondents in connection with the assumption of
 11 debt appear to be impermissible. The Complaint does not specifically allege that the assumption
 12 of Sam Brown's campaign debt by Duty First PAC, an affiliated committee, is impermissible,
 13 and indeed it does not appear to be so. In analogous situations, the Commission has recognized
 14 that debt can be transferred between affiliated committees. In Advisory Opinion 2005-15
 15 (Republican State Executive Committee of West Virginia), the Commission permitted a new
 16 state party committee to assume the debts of the existing state party committee, with which it is
 17 affiliated, allowing the existing state party committee to terminate. Similarly, in Advisory

²⁴ 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b)(1); *see also* Price Index Adjustments for Contribution and Expenditure Limitations and Lobbyist Bundling Disclosure Threshold, 86 Fed. Reg. 7867, 7869 (Feb. 2, 2021); 11 C.F.R. § 100.5(f)(1) (providing that an authorized committee means the principal campaign committee or any other political committee authorized by a candidate).

²⁵ 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(C); 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(d).

²⁶ 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f).

²⁷ Compl. at 4-6, Ex. A.

²⁸ *Id.*

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1 Opinion 1989-22 (Nagle Campaign Committee), the Commission allowed assumption of debt
2 from the 1988 election by the candidate's subsequent committee in the 1990 election.

3 As for the alleged excessive contributions by contributors who contributed the \$2,900
4 maximum amount to Sam Brown for Nevada in connection with the 2022 primary election and
5 later contributed to Duty First PAC, there does not appear to be any such aggregation of
6 contributions that would apply the limits applicable to Sam Brown for Nevada to contributions to
7 Duty First PAC.²⁹ Further, Duty First PAC does not appear to be restricted in how it pays the
8 debts it assumed from Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada. By analogy, in Advisory
9 Opinion 1989-22 (Nagle Campaign Committee) the Commission stated its "long-standing view"
10 that contributions lawfully made with respect to an election in which a candidate participates as a
11 candidate may be spent, in the discretion of the candidate or his/her authorized campaign
12 personnel, for the purpose of retiring outstanding debts from a previous election.³⁰

13 The Commission has, however, identified circumstances in which contributions would be
14 counted against the limits applicable to the previous election, such as when there are facts and
15 circumstances indicating that the contributions were actually solicited to pay the debts remaining
16 from the previous election, or that contributors gave to the current campaign with knowledge that
17 the funds would be applied only to debt retirement.³¹ The available information does not
18 indicate that these circumstances existed with the contributions identified in the Complaint or

²⁹ By contrast, if Sam Brown for Nevada retained the debts from Brown's 2022 campaign, contributions to that same committee after the election from contributors who had given the \$2,900 maximum would have comprised excessive contributions. *See* 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b)(3)(i); FEC Campaign Guide for Congressional Candidates and Committees at 30 (Oct. 2021). Nonconnected committees like Duty First PAC do not receive contributions designated for a particular election, as the limits on contributions it receives apply on an annual basis, not an election basis. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(C) (\$5,000 annual contribution limit).

³⁰ Advisory Opinion 1989-22 (Nagle Campaign Committee) at 2.

³¹ *Id.*

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1 other contributions to Duty First PAC. In addition, where the facts and circumstances
 2 demonstrate that a current campaign is merely a sham or subterfuge, whereby the candidate
 3 intends only to raise and spend funds to retire outstanding debts from a previous election and not
 4 to conduct an active campaign for the next election, the Commission will presume that the
 5 contributions made in those circumstances were made to retire the debts of the past election.³²

6 The available information does not indicate that Duty First PAC existed merely to absorb
 7 Sam Brown for Nevada's 2022 campaign debts. Duty First PAC has paid a portion of the debts
 8 assumed from Sam Brown for Nevada, but it has also raised \$672,293.39 and spent \$440,383.22
 9 including making \$13,600 in contributions to other candidate committees.³³ The Complaint
 10 alleges that Duty First PAC had raised \$91,500 and paid \$55,000 of the debt through mid-2023,
 11 which the Complaint terms a "significant" portion of its contributions and alleges that it spent
 12 fewer than 2% of its funds in 2022 on the PAC's stated purpose to help Republicans take back
 13 Congress and contributed only \$6,000 to candidate committees through the 2023 Mid-Year
 14 Report.³⁴ To date, however, Duty First PAC has raised and spent far more than the amount of
 15 debts paid, and there is no requirement that a certain amount, or percentage, be spent on a
 16 committee's stated purpose.³⁵ Accordingly, the available information indicates that Duty First
 17 PAC did not exist solely to absorb Sam Brown for Nevada's outstanding debt.

³² *Id.* at 2-3.

³³ Duty First PAC, Amended 2022 Year End Report at 4 (May 5, 2023); Duty First PAC, 2023 Year-End Report at 4 (Jan. 31, 2024); Duty First PAC, 2024 30-Day Post-General Report at 4 (Dec. 5, 2024). Duty First PAC also made a \$200,000 donation to NRSC Action on October 28, 2024. Duty First PAC, 2024 30-Day Post-General Report at 36.

³⁴ Compl. at 3-4.

³⁵ See, e.g., F&LA at 1, MUR 8164 (GWEN PAC) (dismissing a complaint alleging that a leadership PAC with a stated mission to support and elect certain candidates spent the majority of its funds on operating expenditures rather than on supporting candidates and causes, concluding that no provision of the Act or Commission regulations regulates the percentage of funds of a leadership PAC that may be devoted to operating expenditures).

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1 Finally, the Complaint alleges that Duty First PAC failed to notify contributors that their
2 contributions would be used to retire debt accumulated in Brown's 2022 campaign.³⁶ This
3 allegation appears to rely upon 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b)(3), which permits candidate committees
4 with net debts outstanding to accept contributions after an election to retire debts under certain
5 conditions, including that the contributions are designated in writing for that past election, but
6 that provision does not contain any such notification requirement for the circumstances at issue
7 in this matter.

8 Accordingly, Respondents' activity in this matter does not appear to violate the Act or
9 Commission regulations, and therefore the Commission dismisses the allegation that Sam
10 Brown, Sam Brown PAC f/k/a Sam Brown for Nevada, and Duty First PAC violated 52 U.S.C.
11 § 30116(f) by knowingly accepting excessive contributions and dismiss the allegation that Duty
12 First PAC violated 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b)(3) by failing to advise contributors of its use of
13 contributions to pay down debts.

³⁶

See Compl. at 4.