

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY SYSTEM

DISMISSAL REPORT

MUR 8224

Respondent: Republicans of Northeast Ohio

Complaint Receipt Date: Mar. 1, 2024

Response Dates: May 23, 2024

**Alleged Statutory and
Regulatory Violations:**

52 U.S.C. § 30103(a)
52 U.S.C. § 30104(c)(1)
52 U.S.C. § 30120(a)(3)
11 C.F.R. § 102.1(a)
11 C.F.R. § 100.22
11 C.F.R. § 109.10
11 C.F.R. § 110.11(a)(2), (b)

The Complaint alleges that Republicans of Northeast Ohio (the “Committee”), a state committee registered in Ohio, violated the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”), when the Committee sent a mailer that endorsed three candidates for federal office and 21 candidates for state office without providing an adequate disclaimer.¹ The mailer states that it was paid for by the Committee but does not include the Committee’s contact information or state that it was not authorized by any candidate or candidate’s committee, and the disclaimer is not contained in a printed box. Further, the Complaint appears to argue that the Committee should have registered with the Commission as a political committee, as it allegedly engaged in express advocacy.²

The Committee filed a Response denying the allegations and arguing that the Committee does not need to register with the Commission because it has not exceeded the \$1,000 threshold to register.³ According to the Response, the Committee spent \$7,328.80 on the mailer and that only approximately 12 percent of the mailer was related to federal candidates or approximately \$879.46

¹ Compl. at 1-2 (Mar. 1, 2024).

² *Id.* at 1.

³ Resp. at 2 (May 23, 2024).

1 which is below the \$1,000 threshold.⁴ Finally, the Committee acknowledges that the disclaimer on
2 the mailer does not meet the Act's requirements but argues that it does not need to comply with the
3 Act because the Committee is not a federal political committee.⁵

4 Based on its experience and expertise, the Commission has established an Enforcement
5 Priority System using formal, pre-determined scoring criteria to allocate agency resources and
6 assess whether particular matters warrant further administrative enforcement proceedings. These
7 criteria include (1) the gravity of the alleged violation, taking into account both the type of activity
8 and the amount in violation; (2) the apparent impact the alleged violation may have had on the
9 electoral process; (3) the complexity of the legal issues raised in the matter; and (4) recent trends in
10 potential violations and other developments in the law. This matter is rated as low priority for
11 Commission action after application of these pre-established criteria. Given that low rating, the
12 apparent low dollar amount at issue, and the unlikelihood that recipients of the mailer would have
13 been confused as to whether the Committee paid for the communications at issue that contained
14 partial disclaimers or other identifying information, we recommend that the Commission dismiss
15 the Complaint, consistent with the Commission's prosecutorial discretion to determine the proper
16 ordering of its priorities and use of agency resources.⁶ We also recommend that the Commission
17 close the file as to all Respondents effective 30 days after the date the certification of this vote is

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821, 831-32 (1985).

1 signed (or on the next business day after the 30th day, if the 30th day falls on a weekend or holiday)
2 and send the appropriate letters.

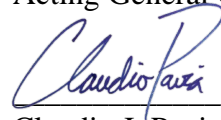
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October 1, 2024

Date

Lisa J. Stevenson
Acting General Counsel

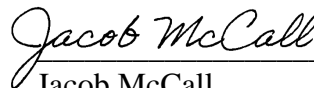
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