



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

**VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**  
**AND ELECTRONIC MAIL**

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June 4, 2025

RE: MUR 8260  
Make America Great Again PAC

Dear Mr. Bookbinder:

On April 29, 2025, the Federal Election Commission reviewed the allegations in your Complaint received May 13, 2024, and, on the basis of the information provided in your Complaint and information provided by the Respondents, dismissed the allegation that (1) Make America Great Again PAC and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer ("MAGA PAC") misreported disbursements to Red Curve Solutions, LLC, in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9; and (2) MAGA PAC misreported disbursements to Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9. Accordingly, the Commission has closed the file in this matter.

The Commission will place documents related to the case on the public record today. *See* Disclosure of Certain Documents in Enforcement and Other Matters, 81 Fed. Reg. 50,702 (Aug. 2, 2016). We enclose any Factual and Legal Analyses and Statements of Reasons available at the time of this letter's transmittal for your information.

The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended, allows a complainant to seek judicial review of the Commission's dismissal of this action within 60 days of the dismissal, which became effective today. *See* 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(8).

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If you have any questions, please contact Justine A. di Giovanni, the attorney assigned to this matter, at (202) 694-1650 or [jdigiovanni@fec.gov](mailto:jdigiovanni@fec.gov).

Sincerely,

Lisa Stevenson  
Acting General Counsel

*Ana J. Peña-Wallace*

BY: Ana J. Peña-Wallace  
Assistant General Counsel

Enclosures

**FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**

**FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS**

RESPONDENTS: Red Curve Solutions, LLC MURs 8251, 8260  
 Never Surrender, Inc., f/k/a Donald J. Trump for  
 President 2024, Inc., and Bradley T. Crate in  
 his official capacity as treasurer  
 Trump Save America Joint Fundraising  
 Committee and Bradley T. Crate in his  
 official capacity as treasurer  
 Save America and Bradley T. Crate in his  
 official capacity as treasurer  
 Trump Make America Great Again Committee  
 and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity  
 as treasurer  
 Make America Great Again PAC and Bradley  
 T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This matter arises from two Complaints alleging that Never Surrender, Inc., f/k/a Donald J. Trump for President 2024, Inc., and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (“Trump for President 2024”); Trump Save America Joint Fundraising Committee and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (“Trump Save America JFC”); Save America and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (“Save America”); Trump Make America Great Again Committee and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (“TMAGA”); and Make America Great Again PAC and Bradley T. Crate in his official capacity as treasurer (“MAGA PAC”; collectively, the “Committees”) failed to accurately report payments in violation of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”). The Complaints allege that payments, aggregating approximately \$8.9 million, that the Committees reported making to Red Curve Solutions (“Red Curve”) were in truth made to other, unnamed legal services providers or other recipients, and that the disbursements may indicate that Red Curve made advances on the Committees’ behalf that the Committees should have reported as contributions. The Complaint in MUR 8260 further alleges that

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1 payments MAGA PAC reported as having been made to Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP (the  
2 “Kasowitz firm”) were, in fact, payments made pursuant to settlement agreements with a former  
3 employee and other women who raised complaints of gender and pregnancy discrimination and  
4 sexual harassment against MAGA PAC.

5 Because it appears that Red Curve incurred legal costs in connection with the performance of  
6 its services for the Committees and the Committees reimbursed those expenses under a contractual  
7 indemnification clause, the Commission dismisses the allegation that the Committees misreported  
8 disbursements to Red Curve in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R.  
9 §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9. Furthermore, as discussed below, since there is no evidence that the  
10 disbursements to Red Curve were repayments for funds advanced to the Committees, the  
11 Commission further dismisses the allegation that Red Curve made, and the Committees knowingly  
12 accepted, prohibited and excessive contributions in violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A), (f),  
13 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(1), 110.9, 114.2(b). Finally, because there is no information  
14 indicating that any settlement payments actually occurred, nor that MAGA PAC’s payments to the  
15 Kasowitz firm were comprised in whole or part of such payments, the Commission dismisses the  
16 allegation that MAGA PAC misreported disbursements to the Kasowitz firm in violation of  
17 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9.

## II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

### A. Respondents

Trump for President 2024 was the authorized committee of Donald J. Trump during the 2024 election cycle.<sup>1</sup> Trump Save America JFC is a joint fundraising representative; its joint fundraising participants are Trump for President 2024 and Save America.<sup>2</sup> Save America is a leadership PAC currently sponsored by the Trump-Graham Majority Fund.<sup>3</sup> TMAGA is a joint fundraising representative; its joint fundraising participants are Save America, MAGA PAC, and the Republican National Committee.<sup>4</sup> MAGA PAC is an unauthorized, multicandidate political committee that first registered with the Commission in 2015 as the principle campaign committee of Donald J. Trump under the name Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Trump for President 2024, Amended Statement of Organization at 2 (Aug. 20, 2024), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/680/202408209674127680/202408209674127680.pdf>. It first registered with the Commission on November 15, 2022. Trump for President 2024, Statement of Organization at 1 (Nov. 15, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/243/202211159546802243/202211159546802243.pdf>. After the election, it converted to a leadership PAC under the name Never Surrender, Inc. Never Surrender, Inc., Amended Statement of Organization at 1-2 (Nov. 12, 2024), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/551/202411129719967551/202411129719967551.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Trump Save America JFC, Amended Statement of Organization at 2 (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/419/202404229636706419/202404229636706419.pdf>. It first registered with the Commission on February 27, 2021, at which time its joint fundraising participants were MAGA PAC and Save America. Trump Save America JFC, Statement of Organization at 2 (Feb. 27, 2021), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/111/202102279429078111/202102279429078111.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Save America, Amended Statement of Organization at 3 (Apr. 22, 2024), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/423/202404229636706423/202404229636706423.pdf>. It first registered with the Commission on November 9, 2020, at which time TMAGA sponsored it. Save America, Statement of Organization at 3 (Nov. 9, 2020), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/422/202011099336977422/202011099336977422.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> TMAGA, Amended Statement of Organization at 2, 5 (Oct. 15, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/755/202210159533171755/202210159533171755.pdf>. It first registered with the Commission on May 25, 2016, at which time its joint fundraising participants were MAGA PAC (then-Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.) and the Republican National Committee. *See* note 5, *infra*; TMAGA, Statement of Organization at 2 (May 25, 2016), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/030/201605259017296030/201605259017296030.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> MAGA PAC, Amended Statement of Organization (Nov. 17, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/784/202211179546823784/202211179546823784.pdf> (reflecting FEC ID number of C00580100); Donald J. Trump for President, Inc., Statement of Organization at 2 (June 29, 2015), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/501/201506299000000501/201506299000000501.pdf> (registering the committee as the principal campaign committee of Donald J. Trump and reflecting FEC ID number of C00580100). On February 27, 2021, MAGA PAC converted to an unauthorized, multicandidate committee and adopted its current name. MAGA PAC, Amended Statement of Organization (Feb. 27, 2021), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/093/202102279429078093/202102279429078093.pdf>.

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Red Curve is a consulting firm that provides “comprehensive treasury, budgeting, and FEC compliance services for political campaigns, party organizations, and PACS.”<sup>6</sup> It was founded in 2009 by its president, Bradley T. Crate, and is a Massachusetts limited liability company that elects to be taxed as a corporation by the Internal Revenue Service.<sup>7</sup> Since 2015, it has received \$59,053,831.99 from the Committees.<sup>8</sup> Of this amount, the Committees reported \$8,223,596.48 with purposes referencing “legal fees” or “legal expenses.”<sup>9</sup> Disbursements for these purposes began in December 2022.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 1 (June 17, 2024), MUR 8251 [hereinafter Red Curve Resp.] (quoting Compl. ¶ 4 (Apr. 24, 2024), MUR 8251 [hereinafter MUR 8251 Compl.] (citing Red Curve Sols., LLC, 2023 Annual Report (Aug. 3, 2023))).

<sup>7</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 1.

<sup>8</sup> *FEC Disbursements: Filtered Results*, FEC.GOV, [https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data\\_type=processed&committee\\_id=C00580100&committee\\_id=C00618371&committee\\_id=C00762591&committee\\_id=C00770941&committee\\_id=C00828541&recipient\\_name=red+curve](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00580100&committee_id=C00618371&committee_id=C00762591&committee_id=C00770941&committee_id=C00828541&recipient_name=red+curve) (last visited Feb. 27, 2025) [hereinafter Disbursements to Red Curve] (reflecting all disbursements made to Red Curve by the Committees). Of this total, Trump for President 2024 disbursed \$4.18 million, Trump Save America JFC \$8.35 million, Save America \$6.85 million, TMAGA, \$23.17 million, and MAGA PAC \$16.5 million under both its current and previous name and committee designation. *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *FEC Disbursements: Filtered Results*, FEC.GOV, [https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data\\_type=processed&committee\\_id=C00580100&committee\\_id=C00618371&committee\\_id=C00762591&committee\\_id=C00770941&committee\\_id=C00828541&recipient\\_name=red+curve&disbursement\\_description=law&disbursement\\_description=legal](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00580100&committee_id=C00618371&committee_id=C00762591&committee_id=C00770941&committee_id=C00828541&recipient_name=red+curve&disbursement_description=law&disbursement_description=legal) (last visited Feb. 27, 2025) [hereinafter Disbursements for Legal Costs] (reflecting all disbursements made to Red Curve by the Committees with the words “legal” or “law” in the purpose of the disbursement). Of this amount, Trump for President 2024 disbursed \$34,737.50, Trump Save America JFC \$232,210.61, Save America \$3.16 million, TMAGA \$284,180.18, and MAGA PAC \$4.51 million (all under its current committee name and designation). *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* Since the disbursements for legal purposes began on December 7, 2022, they have comprised 38.5% of the Committees’ \$21,346,586.88 total disbursements to Red Curve. *Compare* Disbursements for Legal Costs, *with* Disbursements to Red Curve.

The Kasowitz firm is law firm specializing in commercial litigation.<sup>11</sup> Since 2016, MAGA PAC has reported \$4.49 million in disbursements to the Kasowitz firm for “legal consulting,” “recount: legal consulting” and “general: legal consulting.”<sup>12</sup>

## **B. Allegations**

### **1. Payments to Red Curve**

Both Complaints allege that the Committees’ reported disbursements to Red Curve do not reflect the ultimate payee or payees of those disbursements.<sup>13</sup> The Complaints assert that, despite the Committees’ disbursements to Red Curve for purposes indicating legal fees and legal expenses, Red Curve does not appear to provide legal services.<sup>14</sup> The MUR 8251 Complaint alleges that the \$8.2 million in disbursements to Red Curve were not for legal services provided by Red Curve to the Committees, but rather for legal services provided by other vendors to the Committees for which Red Curve either (1) served as a conduit or (2) had paid on the Committees’ behalf and then sought reimbursement.<sup>15</sup> The MUR 8260 Complaint similarly alleges that Red Curve served as an intermediary and as “merely a conduit for the intended recipient of funds” disbursed to it.<sup>16</sup> In addition to publicly available information concerning

<sup>11</sup> *At a Glance*, KASOWITZ BENSON TORRES, <https://www.kasowitz.com/at-a-glance/> (last visited Feb. 27, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> *FEC Disbursements: Filtered Results*, FEC.GOV, [https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data\\_type=processed&committee\\_id=C00580100&recipient\\_name=kasowitz](https://www.fec.gov/data/disbursements/?data_type=processed&committee_id=C00580100&recipient_name=kasowitz) (last visited Feb. 27, 2025) (reflecting all disbursements by MAGA PAC to Kasowitz Benson Torres LLP).

<sup>13</sup> The MUR 8251 Complaint makes this allegation as to all the Committees; the MUR 8260 Complaint makes it solely as to MAGA PAC. *See* MUR 8251 Compl. at 1 (identifying Trump for President 2024, Trump Save America JFC, Save America, TMAGA, and MAGA PAC as respondents); MUR 8260 Compl. at 1 (identifying MAGA PAC as a respondent).

<sup>14</sup> MUR 8251 Compl. ¶ 25 (“As indicated both by publicly available information and its own corporate documents, Red Curve offers budgeting, compliance, and FEC reporting services, but does not appear to offer any sort of legal services.”); Compl. ¶¶ 15 (May 13, 2024), MUR 8260 [hereinafter MUR 8260 Compl.] (“Red Curve does not appear to be a law firm or otherwise capable of providing legal services.”).

<sup>15</sup> MUR 8251 Compl. ¶¶ 26-32.

<sup>16</sup> MUR 8260 Compl. ¶¶ 18-19.

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1 Red Curve’s services, the MUR 8260 Complaint relies on a sworn declaration by a former  
2 employee of Trump’s campaign, Arlene J. Delgado. In that declaration, which was submitted in  
3 connection with civil litigation, Delgado attests that payments made to Red Curve “reflect legal  
4 services related to, and monetary settlements paid to, women who raised complaints of gender  
5 discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, and sexual harassment.”<sup>17</sup> Delgado does not state that  
6 she received any payments in this manner, nor does she provide the basis of her belief that other  
7 such payments were made in this way. In sum, both Complaints allege that the Committees  
8 violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(6) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3(b)(4) by failing to accurately report  
9 disbursements.

10 The MUR 8251 Complaint further alleges that Red Curve made excessive or prohibited  
11 contributions to the Committees, which the Committees knowingly accepted, in violation of  
12 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A), (f), 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(1), 110.9, 114.2(b).<sup>18</sup> It  
13 alleges that Red Curve’s “apparent role in advancing, paying, or facilitating the payment of funds  
14 to cover the costs associated with legal services provided by other vendors” constituted making  
15 contributions to the Committees either in excess of the applicable contributions or in the form of  
16 a prohibited corporate contribution, depending on Red Curve’s corporate status.<sup>19</sup>

17 The Respondents generally deny the allegations. The Responses state that the  
18 Committees’ payments to Red Curve were “pursuant to a contractual indemnity obligation under

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<sup>17</sup> MUR 8260 Compl., Ex. A at 1 (Declaration of Arlene J. Delgado) [hereinafter Delgado Decl.]. The MUR 8260 Complaint also relies on an article in *The Daily Beast* questioning MAGA PAC’s disbursements to Red Curve, stating that the reported disbursements “suggest that since December 2022, when the arrangement seemed to begin, Red Curve has been fronting legal costs out of its corporate account, with Trump’s committees repaying the company later.” Roger Sollenberger, *Trump’s New Legal Bills Are Hiding an \$8 Million Mystery*, DAILY BEAST (Apr. 24, 2024), <https://www.thedailybeast.com/trumps-new-legal-bills-are-hiding-an-dollar8-million-mystery/> (cited in MUR 8260 Compl. ¶ 15).

<sup>18</sup> MUR 8251 Compl. ¶¶ 33-40.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*



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the Committees’ services agreements with Red Curve,” covering “legal costs arising directly from [Red Curve and Bradley Crate’s] services to the Committees.”<sup>20</sup> According to the MUR 8251 Joint Response submitted by four of the five Committees:

[A]s a result of [Bradley] Crate’s designation as the FEC treasurer and custodian of records for the [respondent committees], Mr. Crate and Red Curve have received numerous subpoenas and other requests for documents and information. In responding to those various requests, Red Curve and Mr. Crate have retained outside legal counsel to assist the response. Red Curve then requested indemnification of the costs it incurred, billing the Committees for the amounts claimed. The Committees remitted payments directly to Red Curve after assessing the indemnity requests.<sup>21</sup>

The Committees’ Responses state that the Committees reported the disbursements properly. The Joint Response and the Trump for President 2024 Response describe the structure of the agreement between the parties that led to the reported disbursements whereby Red Curve incurred legal expenses as a result of providing services to the Committees, which the Committees settled up through payments to Red Curve.<sup>22</sup>

The Red Curve Response further states that the MUR 8251 Complaint’s allegations are “purely speculative charges” that “cannot withstand even the most basic of scrutiny.”<sup>23</sup> It denies that its initial payment for legal services arising from its relationship with the Committees

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<sup>20</sup> Trump Save America JFC, Save America, TMAGA, & MAGA PAC Resp. at 1 (June 17, 2024), MUR 8251 [hereinafter MUR 8251 Joint Resp.]; *see also* Trump for President 2024 Resp. at 1-2 (June 17, 2024), MUR 8251 [hereinafter Trump for President Resp.] (“Red Curve sought these reimbursements pursuant to an indemnity provision in its services contract with the Committee, which provides that the Committee will ‘indemnify . . . Red Curve . . . against any and all claims, suits, proceedings, investigations, costs and expenses including reasonable attorney’s fees and court costs arising out of th[e] [service agreement with Trump for President 2024].’”); MAGA PAC Resp. at 1 (June 18, 2024), MUR 8260 [hereinafter MUR 8260 MAGA PAC Resp.] (“With respect to the allegations regarding payments to Red Curve, those allegations have already been addressed in the response filed in MUR 8251, and the Committee adopts and reasserts its response to MUR 8251 herein.”); Red Curve Resp. at 2-3; *id.*, Ex. A ¶ 6 (Aff. of Bradley T. Crate) [hereinafter Crate Aff.].

<sup>21</sup> MUR 8251 Joint Resp. at 1; *see* Red Curve Resp. at 3; Crate Aff. ¶ 8.

<sup>22</sup> *See generally* MUR 8251 Joint Resp.; Trump for President Resp.

<sup>23</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 5.

1 constituted contributions to the Committees because “it is customary for an indemnitee to pay an  
 2 incurred cost first, then seek compensation from the indemnitor when the amount of the loss is  
 3 known,” and because considering this arrangement to be an advance constituting a contribution  
 4 under the Act would “impose an absurd obligation on committees to pay for the legal costs of  
 5 any current or former vendors and staff arising from work done for committees.”<sup>24</sup> Regarding  
 6 the Committees’ reporting obligations, the Red Curve Response argues that reporting the  
 7 indemnification payments as disbursed to Red Curve, rather than to the attorneys Red Curve had  
 8 hired, was permissible under the Act, as “the very nature of Red Curve’s business necessarily  
 9 demands it seek independent legal counsel . . . in carrying out its duties to clients, . . . and it is  
 10 thus appropriate to view any payments made to such counsel as being ‘services . . . used in the  
 11 performance of’ Red Curve’s work for a committee.”<sup>25</sup> Finally, the Red Curve Response also  
 12 argues that the reported purposes of the disbursements were sufficient under the act, as “anyone  
 13 reading the Committees’ FEC reports would ‘easily discern’ exactly why the Committees made  
 14 to Red Curve the disbursements at issue: to reimburse legal costs Red Curve paid.”<sup>26</sup>

## 15 2. Payments to the Kasowitz Firm

16 The MUR 8260 Complaint further alleges that some of or all MAGA PAC’s payments to  
 17 the Kasowitz firm were not, in fact, for legal expenses.<sup>27</sup> The MUR 8260 Complaint bases this  
 18 allegation on the Delgado declaration mentioned *supra*<sup>28</sup> in which Delgado attests that Marc  
 19 Kasowitz, a named partner of the Kasowitz firm, told her that any settlement with Delgado

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<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at 8.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 10 (quoting Factual & Legal Analysis (“F&LA”) at 12, MUR 6510 (Kirk for Senate)); Crate Aff. ¶¶ 7, 9.

<sup>26</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 12.

<sup>27</sup> *See generally* MUR 8260 Compl.

<sup>28</sup> *See id.* ¶¶ 3, 11; Delgado Decl. .

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would be kept confidential: According to Delgado, Kasowitz stated that “[w]hat we would do is the Campaign pays me and then I cut a check to you guys.”<sup>29</sup>

MAGA PAC’s Response argues that the Complaint’s allegations against it are speculative and do not allege that any settlement payments made via the Kasowitz firm actually took place; rather, it argues that the MUR 8260 Complaint’s suggestion that the alleged statement regarding how such a payment would be structured if it occurred is an insufficient basis for Commission action and requests that the Commission dismiss the MUR 8260 Complaint.<sup>30</sup>

### III. LEGAL ANALYSIS

#### A. The Commission Dismisses the Allegations That the Committees Misreported Disbursements to Red Curve for Legal Fees in Violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9

The Act and Commission regulations require authorized political committees to report the name and address of each person to whom they make disbursements aggregating more than \$200 per election cycle, as well as the date, amount, and purpose of such payments.<sup>31</sup> Congress enacted the reporting requirements to ensure public disclosure of “where political campaign money comes from and how it is spent.”<sup>32</sup>

The Act and Commission regulations “are silent with respect to any definition or description of the person to whom an expenditure is made. Moreover, they do not address the

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<sup>29</sup> Delgado Decl. at 1.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.* at 1-2.

<sup>31</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(6); 11 C.F.R. § 104.3(b)(4).

<sup>32</sup> F&LA at 8, MUR 6724 (Bachmann for President, *et al.*) (quoting *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1, 66 (1976)).

1 concepts of ultimate payees, vendors, agents, contractors, or subcontractors in this context.”<sup>33</sup>

2 The Commission has construed the Act to find it sufficient for a committee to report payments to

3 its primary vendors and not those made to subvendors where the subvendor’s services were used

4 “in performance of” the primary vendor’s contract with the committee.<sup>34</sup> But the Commission

5 has determined that reporting the immediate recipient of a disbursement will not satisfy the Act’s

6 reporting requirements when the facts indicate that the recipient is “merely a conduit for the

7 intended recipient of the funds.”<sup>35</sup> For instance, in MUR 4872 (Jenkins for Senate), a committee

8 “did not want . . . to be associated” with a vendor it had hired to perform phone-banking services

9 and arranged to pay the vendor through a third party, which it reported on its disclosure reports

10 in place of the true vendor.<sup>36</sup> The Commission found reason to believe that the committee

11 knowingly and willfully filed false disclosure reports in that matter.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, in MUR 6724

12 (Bachmann for President, *et al.*), the Commission found reason to believe that a committee had

13 violated the Act’s reporting obligations by routing payments to an individual for his personal

14 services to the committee through a vendor that exercised no control over that person and did not

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<sup>33</sup> Advisory Opinion (“AO”) 1983-25 at 2 (Mondale). The Commission has also addressed the issue of reporting ultimate payees of political committee disbursements in situations not applicable to the facts of the instant matter, relating to reimbursements to non-vendor individuals for out-of-pocket expenses, payments to credit card companies, and unreimbursed disbursements by candidates. *See* Reporting Ultimate Payees of Political Committee Disbursements, 78 Fed. Reg. 40,625, 40,626-27 (July 8, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> AO 1983-25 at 2; *see also* F&LA at 12, MUR 6510 (Kirk for Senate, *et al.*) (holding that “a committee need not separately report its consultant’s payments to other persons — such as those payments for services or goods used in the performance of the consultant’s contract with the committee”).

<sup>35</sup> F&LA at 9, MUR 6724 (Bachmann for President, *et al.*).

<sup>36</sup> Conciliation Agreement ¶ IV.6, MUR 4872 (Jenkins for Senate).

<sup>37</sup> *Id.* ¶¶ V-VI.

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1   itself contract with him for any services.<sup>38</sup> And more recently, in MUR 7923 (Friends of David  
2   Schweikert, *et al.*), the Commission found reason to believe that a committee had violated the  
3   Act where it had purposely funneled payments for certain services through a consulting firm in  
4   order “both to obscure that [its campaign manager] was making large outlays on behalf of the  
5   campaign and to hide ‘the true nature, date, and underlying recipient of the disbursements.’”<sup>39</sup>

6           The Responses indicate that the Committee’s disbursements to Red Curve for legal  
7   services were for legal services provided to Red Curve in furtherance of the performance of its  
8   obligations to the Committees, and pursuant to its contracts with its clients.<sup>40</sup> While the Delgado  
9   Declaration states that Delgado “ha[s] information and reason to believe that payments made  
10   to . . . Red Curve . . . reflect legal services related to, and monetary settlements paid to, women  
11   who raised complaints of gender discrimination, pregnancy discrimination, and sexual  
12   harassment,” the declaration does not elaborate on what that information and reason to believe  
13   entails.<sup>41</sup> Rather, the only factual assertion in the declaration is that an individual associated  
14   with the Kasowitz firm told Delgado that settlement payments, if they occurred, would be routed  
15   through that firm, not Red Curve.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> F&LA at 3-4, 10-11, MUR 6724 (Bachmann for President, *et al.*); *see also United States v. Benton*, 890 F.3d 697, 709 (8th Cir. 2018), *cert. denied*, 2019 WL 1231756, 2019 WL 1231758, 2019 WL 1231759 (Mar. 18, 2019) (finding that defendants violated the Act by reporting a false purpose of a committee’s disbursement to conceal a payment routed through the purported vendor made to secure an individual’s endorsement, and noting that the situation was unlike the facts presented in AO 1983-25 and MUR 6510, where “the vendors and subvendors had provided the services described by the campaign”).

<sup>39</sup> F&LA at 15, MUR 7923 (Friends of David Schweikert) (quoting INVESTIGATIVE SUBCOMM., U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMM. ON ETHICS, IN THE MATTER OF ALLEGATIONS RELATING TO REPRESENTATIVE DAVID SCHWEIKERT at 40 (June 20, 2020), <https://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/documents/ISC%20Report%20-%20Schweikert%20-%20final.pdf>).

<sup>40</sup> MUR 8251 Joint Resp. at 1; Trump for President Resp. at 1-2; Red Curve Resp. at 2-3, 8, 10; Crate Aff. ¶¶ 6-9.

<sup>41</sup> Delgado Decl.

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

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Given the absence of any information contradicting the Responses and Crate's Declaration stating that the payments were for legal costs incurred by Red Curve, not by the Committees, it appears that the legal services at issue were rendered "in performance of" Red Curve's contracts with the Committees, and therefore, that it was sufficient for the Committees to report payments to Red Curve as the primary vendor.<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, the Commission dismisses the allegation that the Committees misreported disbursements to Red Curve for legal fees in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9.

**B. The Commission Dismisses the Allegation That Red Curve Made and the Committees Knowingly Accepted Excessive and Prohibited Contributions in Violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A), (f), 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(1), 110.9, 114.2(b)**

The Act defines the term "contribution" to include "any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or anything of value made by any person for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office."<sup>44</sup> The Act prohibits corporations from contributing to a federal candidate or candidate's committee and further prohibits any candidate or candidate's committee from knowingly accepting such a contribution.<sup>45</sup> A "commercial vendor" is any person who provides goods or services to a candidate or political committee, and whose usual and normal business involves the sale, rental, lease, or provision of those goods and services.<sup>46</sup> The extension of credit to a political committee by a commercial vendor is a contribution, "unless the credit is extended in the ordinary course of the person's business and the terms are substantially

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<sup>43</sup> See F&LA at 12, MUR 6510 (Kirk for Senate, *et al.*) (concluding that a committee need not separately report its consultant's payments to other persons made in connection with the consultant's performance of its contractual obligations); AO 1983-25 at 2 (consultant's payments to other persons, made to purchase services or products used in performance of the consultant's contract with a committee, do not have to be separately reported).

<sup>44</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30101(8)(A)(i); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 100.52(a).

<sup>45</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a); 11 C.F.R. § 114.2(b), (d), (e).

<sup>46</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 116.1(c).

1 similar to extensions of credit to nonpolitical debtors that are of similar risk and size of  
 2 obligation.”<sup>47</sup> While the Act does not define “extension of credit,” in other contexts, the term  
 3 generally applies to advances of funds or deferral of monetary obligations.<sup>48</sup> Commission  
 4 regulations state that, in determining whether credit was extended in a commercial vendor’s  
 5 ordinary course of business, the Commission will consider whether: (1) the commercial vendor  
 6 followed its established procedures and its past practice in approving the extension of credit;  
 7 (2) the commercial vendor received prompt payment in full for prior extensions of credit to the  
 8 same committee; and (3) the extension of credit conformed to the usual and normal practice in  
 9 the vendor’s trade or industry.<sup>49</sup> The Commission has explained that “[t]hese factors are  
 10 intended to provide guidance . . . . The factors need not be accorded equal weight and in some  
 11 cases a single factor may not be dispositive.”<sup>50</sup>

12 Here, the evidence available to the Commission indicates that the amounts paid to Red  
 13 Curve by the Committees were not advancements of funds to the Committees; rather, they were  
 14 reimbursements of Red Curve’s own legal expenses that it incurred in connection with the  
 15 services it provided to the Committees, which were made pursuant to an indemnification  
 16 provision in a commercial contract between the parties. Red Curve states that indemnification

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<sup>47</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 100.55 (explaining that a contribution will also result if a creditor fails to make a commercially reasonable attempt to collect the debt); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 116.3(b).

<sup>48</sup> In the context of national banks, “loans and extensions of credit” includes, *inter alia*, “all direct or indirect advances of funds to a person made on the basis of any obligation of that person to repay the funds.” 12 U.S.C. § 84(b)(1). In the context of criminal law, “To extend credit means to make or renew any loan, or to enter into any agreement, tacit or express, whereby the repayment or satisfaction of any debt or claim, whether acknowledged or disputed, valid or invalid, and however arising, may or will be deferred.” 18 U.S.C. § 891.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*

<sup>50</sup> Debts Owed by Candidates and Political Committees, 55 Fed. Reg. 26378, 26281 (June 27, 1990); *see* AO 1991-20 (Call Interactive) at 4.

provisions are “usual and customary terms in commercial services agreements,”<sup>51</sup> and that “[t]o find the making of an advance under these facts indeed would impose an absurd obligation on committees to pay for the legal costs of any current or former vendors and staff arising from work done for committees.”<sup>52</sup>

Under these facts, there is insufficient legal justification to find reason to believe that such contractual provisions result in contributions. Therefore, the Commission dismisses the allegation that Red Curve made, and the Committees knowingly accepted, excessive and prohibited contributions in violation of 52 U.S.C. §§ 30116(a)(1)(A), (f), 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(1), 110.9, 114.2(b).

**C. The Commission Dismisses the Allegation That MAGA PAC Misreported Disbursements to the Kasowitz Firm in Violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9**

As discussed in Part III.A, above, the Act and Commission regulations require authorized political committees to report the name and address of each person to whom they make disbursements aggregating more than \$200 per election cycle.<sup>53</sup> The MUR 8260 Complaint alleges that some of or all MAGA PAC’s payments to the Kasowitz firm were not, in fact, for legal expenses, but instead for settlement payments routed through the Kasowitz firm to obscure the nature of the disbursements.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 6 (citing *Indemnification Clauses in Commercial Contracts*, THOMPSON REUTERS (Mar. 15, 2024), <https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/indemnification-clauses-in-commercial-contracts> [<https://web.archive.org/web/20240315081045/https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/indemnification-clauses-in-commercial-contracts>]). Thompson Reuters updated the article since Red Curve cited it and it no longer contains the quoted material. See *Reduce the Risk of Claims with Indemnification Clauses in Contracts*, THOMPSON REUTERS (Oct. 20, 2024), <https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/en/insights/articles/indemnification-clauses-in-commercial-contracts>).

<sup>52</sup> Red Curve Resp. at 8.

<sup>53</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(6); 11 C.F.R. § 104.3(b)(4).

<sup>54</sup> See MUR 8260 Compl. ¶¶ 3, 11; Delgado Decl.



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MAGA PAC does not deny that it made payments via the Kasowitz firm but instead states that the Complaint is speculative and does not present information that settlement payments made via the Kasowitz firm actually took place.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, the Complaint does not allege any facts indicating that the payments discussed in the Delgado declaration actually occurred. Rather, Delgado attests only that she was told by Kasowitz that the Trump campaign would make any settlement payment to her to the Kasowitz firm, and that the Kasowitz firm would then pay Delgado.<sup>56</sup> Delgado does not state that she received any payments in this manner, nor does she expand on any other information leading her to believe that other such payments were made in this way. The Complaint and the Delgado declaration instead point to the large amounts MAGA PAC disbursed to the Kasowitz firm, and the fact that public information indicates that Trump and his businesses have used similar payment arrangements in other circumstances.<sup>57</sup> Without more, these facts do not adequately support a finding of reason to believe.<sup>58</sup>

Accordingly, the Commission dismisses the allegation that MAGA PAC misreported disbursements to the Kasowitz firm in violation of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b)(5), (6) and 11 C.F.R. §§ 104.3(b)(4), 104.9.

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<sup>55</sup> MUR 8260 MAGA PAC Resp. at 1.

<sup>56</sup> Delgado Decl.

<sup>57</sup> MUR 8260 Compl. ¶¶ 3-4 (citing Brett Neely & Domenico Montanaro, *Trump Admits to Authorizing Stormy Daniels Payoff, Denies Sexual Encounter*, NPR (May 2, 2018), <https://www.npr.org/2018/05/02/607943366/giuliani-says-trump-did-know-about-stormy-daniels-payment>); Delgado Decl.

<sup>58</sup> See Statement of Reasons, Comm’rs Mason, Sandstrom, Smith & Thomas at 1-2, MUR 4960 (Hillary Rodham Clinton for US Senate Expl. Comm., Inc., *et al.*) (“The Commission may find ‘reason to believe’ only if a complaint sets forth sufficient specific facts which, if proven true, would constitute a violation of the FECA. . . .”).