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May 1995

Federal Election Commission

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Regulations

New Personal Use Regulations Go Into Effect

The revised personal use rules summarized in the March 1995 *Record*, page 1, became effective on April 5, 1995. See Federal Register Announcement of Effective Date (60 FR 17193, April 5, 1995).

The new rules clarify the ban on the personal use of campaign funds by establishing that those expenses that exist irrespective of a federal candidate's campaign or duties as an officeholder are personal in nature and may not be paid for with campaign funds.

The rules also list a number of expenses that under specific circumstances are considered per se personal use: household food items and supplies; funeral, cremation and burial expenses; clothing; tuition payments; mortgage, rent and utility payments; entertainment; dues, fees and gratuities; and salary payments to the candidate's family. Special considerations with respect to legal, meal, travel, vehicle and mixed-use expenses are also covered in the rules.

Refer to the March *Record* for a detailed explanation of these and other personal use issues. Alternatively, order a free copy of the personal use handout from the FEC's Information Division: call 800/424-9530. ♦

Court Cases

Wilson v. U.S.A. et al.

On March 2, 1995, the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California upheld the constitutionality of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). Additionally, the court ordered the State of California to present a proposed plan for implementing the NVRA within 10 days of this decision.

The NVRA, a federal law that went into effect on January 1, 1995, mandated that states requiring advance registration to vote in federal elections must permit voter registration by: mail-in application; simultaneous application with driver's license application, renewal, or change of address; and simultaneous application at disability and public assistance agencies as well as other agencies designated by the state.¹

(continued on page 4)

¹ The FEC is the federal agency entrusted with the development of a National Voter Registration Form. This form has been available since January 1. The FEC is also required to submit a report to Congress every 2 years assessing the impact of the National Voter Registration Act and suggesting improvements in voter registration forms and procedures.

Public Funding

Spending Limits: If the Presidential Election Were Held in '95 . . .

In a March 3 press release, the FEC provided preliminary spending limits for publicly funded 1996 Presidential candidates:

- \$36 million for each primary election candidate, \$6 million of which may only be used for fundraising expenses; and
- \$60 million for the general election nominee of each major party.¹

Additionally, each major party will have a \$12 million spending limit for their national convention and a \$11.5 million spending limit

¹ Presidential campaigns which decline federal funding are not subject to these limits. Such campaigns may spend unlimited amounts of money, but their receipts are subject to contribution limits.

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999 E Street, NW
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202/219-3420
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for expenditures made in connection with their nominee's general election campaign. 2 U.S.C. 441a(d).

These figures are not final. They represent what the Presidential spending limits would be if the election were held in 1995. The FEC provides this calculation to help Presidential campaigns meet their planning needs in their early formative stages.

In addition to these limits, campaign spending for Presidential primary elections is also restricted by state-by-state limits. These state limits are based on a statutory formula that takes into account each state's voting age population and a cost-of-living adjustment.²

A complete listing of preliminary spending limits for each Presidential primary is included in the March 3 press release. Copies of the press release are available free of charge from the Public Records Office. Call 800/424-9530 and ask for Public Records or call 202/219-4140 to reach the office directly.

Under the public funding program, eligible Presidential primary candidates receive dollar-for-dollar federal funds for matchable contributions; only contributions from individuals, and only up to \$250 of a contributor's total, are matchable.

Additionally, each major party nominee in 1996 may accept a federal grant equal to the general election spending limit. A nominee accepting the grant will not be able to use private contributions to conduct campaign activity.

The spending limits for nominees do not apply to certain legal and accounting costs, for which candidates may spend an unlimited amount. (Nominees may solicit private contributions to a special fund set up to cover these expenses.)

² Each state limit is calculated by adding a cost-of-living adjustment to either the state's voting age population multiplied by 16¢, or \$200,000, whichever is greater.

The overall spending limits for the primary election period and the general election were established by law in 1974, and are increased each election cycle by a cost-of-living adjustment.

Since the cost-of-living adjustment and, with respect to the state-by-state limits, the voting age population are fluctuating variables, the actual 1996 spending limits won't be available until early next year. Look for them in a future issue of the *Record* at that time. ♦

Gramm First Presidential Candidate Declared Eligible For Matching Funds

On March 20, the FEC declared Phil Gramm the first 1996 Presidential candidate eligible for public matching funds. Mr. Gramm is seeking the Republican party's 1996 Presidential nomination.

To establish eligibility for the Presidential public funding program, a candidate must submit documentation showing that he or she raised in excess of \$5,000 in matchable contributions in each of at least 20 states. Only contributions received from individuals, and only up to \$250 of a contributor's total, are matchable; the federal government will match an eligible campaign's matchable contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. This threshold submission is reviewed by the FEC's Audit Division before the Commission makes its determination. The candidate must also certify that he or she will abide by spending limits, use funds for campaign-related expenses only, agree to an FEC audit and otherwise comply with the election law.

Presidential candidates may establish their eligibility for matching funds during 1995 and, once eligible, submit additional contributions for matching fund consideration on the first business day of each month through March 1997.

The U.S. Treasury, however, will not begin disbursing matching funds until January 2, 1996. ♦

Hearing on Buchanan Repayment Determination

In a March 2, 1995, public hearing, counsel for the Buchanan for President Committee (active in the 1992 Republican Presidential primary) challenged the Commission's following initial repayment determinations:

- That the committee repay \$399,521 to the U.S. Treasury for matching funds received in excess of entitlement;
- That the committee repay \$17,116 to the U.S. Treasury, the pro rata portion of a \$50,000 disbursement made by the campaign to the candidate, Patrick Buchanan (the committee argued that this disbursement represented repayment for a loan from the candidate); and
- That the committee repay \$11,220 to the U.S. Treasury for nonqualified campaign expenses.¹

Matching Funds in Excess of Entitlement

Counsel for the Buchanan committee contended that the audit staff's wind-down estimate for the committee—an estimate which affects the repayment determinations—was low. Counsel offered instead a recent estimate by the committee (including an estimated \$325,000 in legal fees) which took into account potential expenses for enforcement actions, litigation and administrative matters such as the

public hearing. Additionally, counsel challenged the notion that the audit staff was better suited than the committee to determine its wind-down costs, and argued that the Commission should accept the committee's estimate as a sincere depiction of the campaign's financial situation.

Lastly, counsel argued that a final repayment determination for excess campaign funds should wait until after the committee had completed its winding-down phase. Otherwise, the committee might repay funds it would later need.

Candidate's Loan

In Advisory Opinion 1977-58, the Commission specifically forbade a committee from retroactively reclassifying a candidate's contribution as a loan. To have allowed this would have undermined the intent of 2 U.S.C. §434(b)(12), which requires the timely disclosure of debts and obligations. It also would have offered candidates an avenue through which they could convert campaign funds to personal use. Therefore, if a candidate intends to treat a personal contribution as a loan to his committee, the committee must report the transaction as a loan from the outset and must continue reporting the loan until it is repaid.

At issue at the hearing was \$50,000 received from the candidate and reported initially as contributions. This portion of the committee's presentation was delivered by Angela Buchanan, the candidate's sister and the campaign's manager and current treasurer.

Ms. Buchanan related how in the early days of the campaign the candidate loaned the committee \$50,000. Although Ms. Buchanan stated that she had an understanding with her brother that these payments constituted a loan and that she would undertake efforts to pay him back at campaign's end, the committee treasurer at the time reported them as contributions. The payments were not reported as a loan

until October 1992. In the absence of contemporaneous documentation, the committee presented an affidavit from Ms. Buchanan contending that Mr. Buchanan's payments totaling \$50,000 were intended as a loan.

Nonqualified Expenditures

The audit staff determined that the committee incurred nonqualified expenses, including expenses that lacked sufficient documentation to show that they were indeed qualified, expenses that were not necessary for the campaign's wind down, certain staff bonuses, and fundraising expenses incurred after the committee was no longer in a deficit position.

Counsel offered to provide further documentation to refute the audit staff's determination. Counsel also argued that expenses such as updating computer software were indeed necessary to wind down the campaign, that staff bonuses were justified and appropriate, and that the committee was indeed in a deficit position when it incurred the fundraising expenses in question. Counsel challenged the notion that the audit staff could substitute its judgment for that of the committee with regard to what needed to be done to wind down the campaign.

The Commission will consider counsel's oral and written remarks when determining the committee's final repayment obligation. ♦

Need FEC Material in a Hurry?

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Use a touch tone phone to dial **202/501-3413** and follow the instructions. To order a complete menu of Flashfax documents, enter document number 411 at the prompt.

¹ Although not discussed at the hearing, the following nonrepayment issues were addressed in accompanying written testimony submitted by the committee: excessive reimbursements of \$6,283 received from members of the press and staff advances of \$53,251 resulting in in-kind contributions made in excess of the law's limits.

Court Cases

(continued from page 1)

California Governor Pete Wilson filed suit against the federal government (including the FEC) on December 20, 1994. In his suit, Governor Wilson argued that the NVRA, as an unfunded federal mandate, was unconstitutional under the Tenth Amendment, which reserves to the states those powers not delegated to the federal government by the Constitution.

The court, however, deemed that Article I, Section 4, of the Constitution does indeed delegate to the federal government the authority to enforce the NVRA:

The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof, but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations, except as to the Places of chusing [sic] Senators.

U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, No. C 95-20042 JW and No. C 94-20860 JW, March 2, 1995. ♦

NRSC v. FEC (94-5148)

On March 14, 1995, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia vacated the district court's decision of May 11, 1994, and ordered the court to dismiss the complaint against the FEC as moot.

The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) originally filed this suit with the district court on February 23, 1994, to stop the FEC from proceeding in an internal enforcement matter (MUR 3204) that had been initiated by a Commission whose structure was later declared unconstitutional by the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in *FEC v. NRA Political Victory Fund*.¹ (See page 5 of the May 1994 *Record* for a summary of the NRSC's original suit, and page 2 of the December 1993 *Record* for a summary of the *NRA* case. See also page 1 of the February 1995 *Record* for the Supreme Court's subsequent ruling in the *NRA* case.) The district court dismissed the suit on May 11, 1994, on the grounds that the case was not ripe for adjudication. (See page 2 of the July 1994 *Record* for a summary of the district court's decision.) In arriving at this conclusion, the district court reasoned that for the case to be ripe, the NRSC needed to demonstrate that it had suffered injury as a result of an FEC action—an impossibility since the FEC was in the midst of its investigation and had not yet taken action in this matter.²

The NRSC's suit became moot because subsequent to the district court's decision the FEC closed MUR 3204 without finding probable cause to believe the NRSC had violated federal election law. ♦

¹ *The court ruled that the presence of two ex officio members on the Commission violated the separation of powers doctrine; the ex officios have since been removed.*

² *At the time of the district court's decision, the FEC had found reason to believe a violation had occurred with respect to MUR 3204 and was proceeding with an investigation to determine whether there was probable cause to believe the NRSC had violated federal election law.*

FEC v. Montoya

The FEC voluntarily dismissed this case against Mr. Rick Montoya and the Rick Montoya for United States Senate Committee after defendants fulfilled their obligation to the FEC.

The FEC filed this suit because the defendants had failed to pay a \$3,000 civil penalty agreed upon in a conciliation agreement. MUR 3444. When the defendants subsequently paid in full with all accrued interest, the FEC dismissed this case.

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, No. 94-2675, March 16, 1995. ♦

FEC v. MRSC

On March 22, 1995, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division, dismissed this case pursuant to a stipulation by the parties.

The FEC originally charged that the Michigan Republican State Committee (MRSC) had knowingly accepted \$5,550 in excessive contributions, had deposited \$35,655 in impermissible contributions into its federal account, and had exceeded its coordinated party expenditure limit for a Senate candidate by \$8,298.

The court issued a consent order on July 18, 1994, that resolved the excessive and impermissible contribution issues; the MRSC agreed to pay a \$12,500 civil penalty and to transfer \$35,655 from its federal account to its nonfederal accounts. The violation of the coordinated party expenditure limit, however, remained pending.

Subsequent to the consent order, the MRSC paid the civil penalty and transferred the nonfederal monies as agreed.

With regard to the remaining allegation, MRSC provided the FEC with documentation showing that

Federal Register

Federal Register notices are available from the FEC's Public Records Office.

1995-6

11 CFR 100, 104 and 113:
Personal Use of Campaign Funds;
Final Rules: Announcement of
Effective Date (60 FR 17193,
April 5, 1995)

the Senate candidate reimbursed the committee for the expenditures in question and therefore the committee did not exceed its coordinated party expenditure limit.

U.S. District Court for the Western District of Michigan, Southern Division, No. 5:94-CV-27, March 22, 1995. ♦

Advisory Opinions

**AO 1994-35
Terminating Reporting Obligations**

Susan Alter, an unsuccessful 1992 House candidate from New York, must continue reporting payments on a 30-year mortgage on her personal residence because she used the mortgage to repay a campaign loan.

Ms. Alter sought to terminate her committee and free herself of the need to report the mortgage payments for the following reasons: she intends to pay the mortgage with her own personal monies, she no longer holds nor plans to seek public office, and the campaign treasurer is no longer available.

Under the Federal Election Campaign Act (the Act), the amount of outstanding debts and obligations owed by a political committee must be continuously reported until extinguished either by payment in full or by lawful settlement subject to review by the Commission. 2 U.S.C. §434(b)(8), 11 CFR 104.3(d) and 104.11. Furthermore, a political committee may terminate its reporting status only upon filing a termination report or statement indicating that it will no longer receive any contributions or make disbursements, and that it has no outstanding debts or obligations. 2 U.S.C. §433(d)(1).

These provisions of the Act preclude the committee from terminating its reporting obligations because the mortgage remains an outstanding campaign debt.

Ms. Alter, however, may be able to obtain relief from her committee's reporting obligations under FEC Directive 45. That directive establishes criteria by which an insolvent committee may be considered for administrative termination, either on request or on the Commission's own initiative.

Certain prerequisites must be met to be considered for administrative termination under Directive 45. For instance, the election for which the committee was established must have occurred more than 5 years ago. Additional criteria are laid out in Directive 45 and at 11 CFR 102.3 and 102.4.

Presently, Ms. Alter's committee does not meet any of these prerequisites. Although Directive 45 does not offer Ms. Alter immediate relief, it does provide her with a future avenue through which she might be able to avoid reporting mortgage payments for the next 28 years.

The Commission made no guarantees but encouraged Ms. Alter to apply for administrative termination in 1997, at which time her committee would be eligible for consideration.

Date Issued: March 24, 1995;
Length: 4 pages. ♦

**AO 1994-36
Solicitation of Stockholders In Employee-Owned Company**

The Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), an employee-owned company, may solicit contributions for its PAC from employees who qualify as stockholders. Qualifying employees include those who are direct stockholders and the small number of Profit Sharing I participants who choose to purchase SAIC stock

using funds from their voluntary employee accounts. Other Profit Sharing I participants and participants of SAIC's other retirement plans—CODA, ESOP and Profit Sharing II—may not be solicited until they either quit the company or reach retirement age.

Definition of Stockholder

A corporation and its PAC may only solicit the corporation's administrative and executive personnel, its stockholders and the families of both groups. 2 U.S.C. §441b(b)(4)(A)(i). Since SAIC is an employee-owned corporation, the question at hand is when do its employees qualify as stockholders and therefore as solicitable personnel under the Federal Election Campaign Act (the Act).

Under the Act, a stockholder is defined as a person who:

- Has a vested beneficial interest in the stock;
- Has the power to direct how the stock will be voted; and
- Has the right to receive dividends. 11 CFR 114.1(h).

Employees Who Are Direct Stockholders

SAIC employees who purchase stock directly from the company have a vested interest on the basis of their ownership of the stock. These employees also have the right to vote the stock they own and to receive dividends (although it has been SAIC's past and current policy not to declare dividends).

SAIC employees who purchase stock directly thus meet the Act's definition of stockholder and may therefore be solicited for contributions to SAIC's PAC. Their stockholder status is not affected by the fact that SAIC has a right to repurchase stock from a former employee and the right of first refusal if an employee wishes to sell the stock outside the internal market. The Commission noted that the price

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Advisory Opinions

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paid by SAIC to obtain stock when exercising these rights did not amount to a forfeiture of the stock by the employee.

Employees Who Are Beneficial Stockholders

SAIC employees may choose from four retirement plans: the Cash or Deferred Account (CODA), the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), Profit Sharing I and Profit Sharing II.

Participants in all four plans who have at least one share of SAIC stock vested in their retirement accounts, whether held beneficially or directly, are considered to be fully vested, thereby meeting the Act's first criteria for being a stockholder.

Participants in all plans also satisfy the voting rights criteria, since they may vote their SAIC stock through a company trustee.

In the past, to determine whether a participant has the right to receive dividends, the Commission has considered whether employees were able to withdraw at least one share of stock without incurring a suspension period. See Advisory Opinion 1994-27.

Given a number of restrictions on employees' rights to access their funds, the Commission concluded that participants in four of the programs do not qualify as stockholders under the Act until they either reach retirement age or leave SAIC. At that point, they may be solicited.

Some Profit Sharing I participants may nonetheless still qualify as stockholders before retirement or termination. A provision of this plan allowed participants to purchase SAIC stock through accounts funded by voluntary employee contributions. These particular funds could be accessed without restrictions. Therefore, Profit Sharing I participants who have at least one share of

SAIC stock fully vested qualify as stockholders under the Act.

Date Issued: March 24, 1995;
Length: 8 pages. ♦

Advisory Opinion Requests

Advisory opinion requests (AORs) are available for review and comment in the Public Records Office.

AOR 1995-12

Relationship between national banking trade association and state banking associations for PAC fundraising purposes. (Independent Bankers Association of America; March 24, 1995; 3 pages plus 32-page attachment)

AOR 1995-13

Eligibility of membership association members for PAC solicitations. (American Society of Association Executives; March 30, 1995; 11 pages plus 8-page attachment) ♦

Alternative Disposition of Advisory Opinion Requests

AOR 1995-4

The Commission closed this AOR without issuing an opinion because necessary facts were not submitted. The request, made by Congressman Douglas Applegate (retired), concerned the purchase of a leased car by a PAC he established. ♦

AOR 1995-6

The requester, Red Lion Hotels and Inns, withdrew this AOR in order to submit a revised version following a review of requester's internal procedures. Requester had sought a waiver of the partnership contribution requirements at 11 CFR 110.1(e). ♦

Publications

1995 Combined Federal/State Disclosure Directory Now Available

The 1995 edition of the Combined Federal/State Disclosure Directory is now available. The directory lists the state and federal offices responsible for public disclosure of reports and for dispensing information on the following topics:

- Campaign finance
- Personal finances of candidates and officials
- Public financing
- Spending on state initiatives and referenda
- Lobbying
- Candidates on the ballot
- Election results
- Accessibility to polling places
- Election-related enforcement actions
- Corporate registrations

In addition, the directory notes which state offices have on-line access to the FEC's data base and, for the first time, notes which state campaign finance data bases are on-line as well.

The directory includes addresses, phone numbers and fax numbers for each office, and also identifies staff who are knowledgeable in the subject areas.

Limited copies are available free of charge from the FEC's Public Records Office. To obtain a free copy, call 800/424-9530 or 202/219-4140. ♦

Compliance

MURs Released to the Public

Listed below are summaries of FEC enforcement cases (Matters Under Review or MURs) recently released for public review. This listing is based on the FEC press releases of March 3, 9, 15, 17 and 31, and April 5, but it does not include the 24 MURs in which the Commission took no action. Files on closed MURs are available for review in the Public Records Office.

MUR 2581

Respondents: (a) Michigan Republican State Committee, Ronald D. Dahlke, treasurer; (b) Republican National Committee, William J. McManus, treasurer (DC)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Excessive coordinated expenditures; excessive contributions; deposit and transfer of nonfederal funds to federal account; reporting failures

Disposition: (a) Probable cause to believe; litigation initiated; court imposed \$12,500 civil penalty for excessive contributions and deposit of nonfederal funds; case dismissed with respect to excessive coordinated expenditures; probable cause to believe but took no further action (inaccurate reporting; transfers of prohibited contributions to federal account); (b) probable cause to believe but took no further action

MUR 3452

Respondents: Durant for United States Senator, Larry Dickerson, treasurer (MI)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Excessive contributions

Disposition: \$22,500 civil penalty

MUR 3721

Respondents: Perot '92 (formerly known as Perot Petition Committee), Mike Poss, treasurer (TX)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Failure to file 48 hour notices on time

Disposition: \$65,000 civil penalty

MUR 3802

Respondents: Anthony for Congress Campaign Committee, Joseph Hickey, treasurer (AR)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Failure to file 48 hour notices

Disposition: \$22,000 civil penalty

MUR 3831

Respondents: DNC Services Corporation/Democratic National Committee, Robert T. Matsui, treasurer (DC)

Complainant: Jonathan C. Close (IL)

Subject: Disclaimer; misrepresentation of campaign authority

Disposition: No reason to believe

MUR 3923

Respondents: (a) Houston Host Committee, Inc., Frank Maresh, treasurer (TX); (b) Binney & Smith (PA); (c) Bonneau Company (TX); (d) COMPCO Metal Products (OH); (e) Cross Communications (CO); (f) Fresh Technologies Group (AZ); (g) Philip Morris USA (NY); (h) Homewood-Flossmoor Community High School Job Training Partnership Class for Americans with Disabilities (IL)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Corporate contributions

Disposition: (a) \$5,000 civil penalty; \$12,930 disgorged to U.S. Treasury; (b)-(h) reason to believe but took no further action

MUR 3952

Respondents: (a) 1992 Democratic National Convention Committee, Inc., Robert T. Matsui, treasurer (DC); (b) Democratic National Committee, Robert T. Matsui, treasurer (DC); (c) Alexis Herman; (d) Anne Reingold

Complainant: FEC initiated (convention committee audit)

Subject: Prohibited acceptance of private contributions; exceeding convention expenditure limits; excessive contributions

Disposition: (a)-(b) Reason to believe but took no further action (private contributions); no reason to believe (exceeding expenditure limits); (c)-(d) no reason to believe (excessive contributions)

MUR 3956

Respondents: Friends of Bowen, Inc., Dr. Tony Jackson, treasurer (OH)

Complainant: Citizens for Mann Campaign (OH)

Subject: Failure to identify contributors adequately ("best efforts"); reporting joint contributions

Disposition: Reason to believe but took no further action ("best efforts"); no reason to believe (joint contributions)

MUR 3980

Respondents: (a) Van Hipp, Jr. (SC); (b) Hipp for Congress Committee, William Ellison Thomas, treasurer (SC)

Complainant: Arthur William Rashap (SC)

Subject: Disclaimer

Disposition: Insufficient votes to find reason to believe

MUR 3995

Respondents: (a) Ralph Terry Hudgens (GA); (b) Hudgens for Congress, Tim Waters, treasurer (GA)

Complainant: K. G. Watson (GA)

Subject: Disclaimer

Disposition: No reason to believe

MUR 4014

Respondents: (a) Committee on Arrangements for the 1992 Republican National Convention, Alec Poitevint, treasurer (DC);

(b) Republican National Committee, William J. McManus, treasurer (DC); (c) Jack A. Laughery (NC)

Complainant: FEC initiated (1992 convention audit)

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Compliance

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Subject: Prohibited acceptance of private contributions; exceeding convention expenditure limits; excessive contributions

Disposition: (a)–(b) Reason to believe but took no further action (prohibited acceptance of private contributions); no reason to believe (exceeding convention expenditure limits); (c) no reason to believe (excessive contributions)

MUR 4024

Respondents: UAW-V-CAP, Bill Casstevens, treasurer (MI)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Excessive contributions; inaccurate reporting of contributions; prohibited contribution from nonfederal state affiliate

Disposition: \$3,400 civil penalty (excessive contributions; inaccurate reporting); reason to believe but took no further action (prohibited contribution from state affiliate)

MUR 4162

Respondents: Harris County Democratic Executive Committee, David Minberg, treasurer (TX)

Complainant: FEC initiated

Subject: Failure to file report on time

Disposition: \$900 civil penalty ♦

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