



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

March 25, 2016

Michelle Ureste
4550 Walnut Lake Road
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323

Dear Ms. Ureste:

The Department of State (Department) received a formal complaint filed by Ben Ohly against you, alleging that you violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* The investigation and resolution of this complaint is governed by section 15 of the Act and the corresponding administrative rules, R 169.51 *et seq.* Copies of the complaint and supporting documentation are enclosed with this letter.

In Michigan it is unlawful for a public body or an individual acting on its behalf to use or authorize the use of "funds, personnel, office space, computer hardware or software, property, stationery, postage, vehicles, equipment, supplies, or other public resources to make a contribution or expenditure [.]” MCL 169.257(1). A knowing violation of section 57 is a misdemeanor offense. MCL 169.257(4).

Mr. Ohly alleges that you unlawfully spent township funds to publicize your candidacy and solicit donations.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Department’s examination of these matters and your right to respond to the allegations before the Department proceeds further. It is important to understand that the Department is neither making this complaint nor accepting the allegations as true.

If you wish to file a written response to this complaint, you are required to do so within 15 business days of the date of this letter. Your response may include any written statement or additional documentary evidence you wish to submit. All materials must be sent to the Department of State, Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918. If you fail to submit a response, the Department will render a decision based on the evidence furnished by the complainant.

A copy of your answer(s) will be provided to Mr. Ohly, who will have an opportunity to submit a rebuttal statement to the Department. After reviewing all of the statements and materials provided by the parties, the Department will determine whether “there may be reason to believe that a violation of [the MCFA] has occurred [.]” MCL 169.215(10). Note that the Department’s enforcement powers include the possibility of entering a conciliation agreement, conducting an administrative hearing, or referring this matter to the Attorney General for enforcement of the criminal penalties provided in section 57(4) of the Act.

Michelle Ureste
March 25, 2016
Page 2

If you have any questions concerning this matter, you may contact me at (517) 241-0395.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori A. Bourbonais". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Ben Ohly

Campaign Finance Complaint Form Michigan Department of State

This complaint form may be used to file a complaint alleging that someone violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (the MCFA, 1976 PA 388, as amended; MCL 169.201 *et seq.*). All information on the form must be provided along with an original signature and evidence. **Please print or type all information.**

I allege that the MCFA was violated as follows:

Section 1. Complainant		
Your Name <i>Ben Ohly</i>	Daytime Telephone Number <i>248-752-1299</i>	
Mailing Address <i>4904 Hardwoods Drive</i>		
City <i>West Bloomfield Twp.</i>	State <i>mi.</i>	Zip <i>48323</i>

Section 2. Alleged Violator		
Name <i>Michelle Economou-Ureste (township supervisor)</i>		
Mailing Address <i>Town Hall, 4550 Walnut Lake Road</i>		
City <i>West Bloomfield Twp.</i>	State <i>Mi</i>	Zip <i>48323</i>

Section 3. Alleged Violations (Use additional sheet if more space is needed.)

Section(s) of the MCFA violated:

169.257

Explain how those sections were violated:

Violator used official township social media to publicize her candidacy and request donations.

Evidence that supports those allegations (attach copies of pertinent documents and other information)

Attached photos

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 MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
 ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL
 2016 MAR 22 PM 3:09

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West Bloomfield

MICHIGAN



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WELCOME to the TOWNSHIP of West Bloomfield

RECENT Township News

5:30 PM Zoning Board of Appeals

Welcome to the Charter Township of West Bloomfield

Michigan Law Enforcement Memorial Ceremony



West Bloomfield Twp

With national exemplary schools, 27 lakes, spectacular scenery and all-season recreational activities, West Bloomfield is the place to live!

West Bloomfield Michigan
wbtp.com
Joined June 2009

Photos and videos



TWEETS 165
FOLLOWING 44
FOLLOWERS 833

Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Mar 10
West Bloomfield Supervisor conducts Active Assailant Training at the Police Station at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. More info @ 451-4813

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Mar 10
Call 248-451-4813 for more information regarding West Bloomfield Active Assailant Training today at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Mar 10
West Bloomfield Supervisor Economou Ureste Conducts Active Assailant Training Today at Town Hall at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Mar 6
I've just published my website, check it out at micheleeconomoureste.com via GoDaddy x.co/1GVAH

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Feb 28
West Bloomfield Clerk Shaughnessy collected 212 cases of water & raised over \$500 for flintkids.org #waterforflint

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Feb 24
Supervisor Michele Economou Ureste announces that West Bloomfield Town Hall will be closed Thursday, February 25, due to inclement weather.

...



West Bloomfield Twp @WestBloomfield · Jan 25
#FlintWaterCrisis #Flint

Have an account?

Phone, email or username

Password

Remember me. Forget password?

Log In

New to Twitter?

Sign up

Sign up now to get your own personalized timeline

Sign up

You may also like · Refresh

Oakland County @OakGay

West Bloomfield PAR @WBParRec

West Bloomfield Patch @WBloomfieldPatch

Rochester Hills @RochesterHills

The Oakland Press @TheOaklandPress

Trends

#WWERoadblock

#KCAAs

#ANTWorldTour

#MarinaNoliShow

HAPPY BIRTHDAY LUJAN SANTANA

#GirlsWhoRun

Seton Hall

REDDY SET SLIME

GET WEIRD TOUR TOMORROW

Kansas City

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West Bloomfield Twp
@WestBloomfield

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I've just published my website, check it out at
micheleconomoureste.com via GoDaddy
x.co/1GvAH

RETWEET

1



10:28 AM - 6 Mar 2016



micheleeconomoureste.com ↻



+1.248.977.6805
Call to Donate

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

April 4, 2016

Ben Ohly
4904 Hardwoods Drive
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323

Dear Mr. Ohly:

The Department of State received a response to the complaint you filed against Michele Economou Ureste, which concerns an alleged violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA), 1976 P.A. 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* A copy of the response is provided as an enclosure with this letter.

If you elect to file a rebuttal statement, you are required to send it within 10 business days of the date of this letter to the Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori A. Bourbonais".

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Michele Economou Ureste

March 31, 2016

Department of State
Secretary of State
Richard H. Austin Building
1st Floor
430 W. Allegan
Lansing, MI 48918
Attention: Lori Bourbonais, Bureau of Elections

Dear Lori,

I am respectfully responding to the allegations set forth by Ben Ohly regarding campaign finance. I have always respected the separation between personal and township business.

The township twitter has only 144 subscribers, primarily media outlets. I have only used twitter to build awareness for township events. Media would not at all be interested in my personal website. There is absolutely no benefit to me between township twitter media subscribers and my personal web site, which I recently created through godaddy.com.

It was a mistake, or I certainly do not know *how* "check out the web site for www.micheleconomoureste.com" could have appeared on the township twitter.

My fundraising efforts are limited to personal fundraiser events, and I generally donate my personal funds for my election. I have never received a contribution by any other means, other than a personal fundraiser event. My personal website is a template that may suggest to donate, but there is no pay pal or like funding mechanism on my personal website.

Sincerely,

Michele Economou Ureste, M.P.A.

West Bloomfield Township Supervisor

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
2016 APR -1 PM 3:25
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

April 14, 2016

Ben Ohly
4904 Hardwoods Drive
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323

Dear Mr. Ohly:

The Department of State received a supplemental response to the complaint you filed against Michele Economou Ureste, which concerns an alleged violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA), 1976 P.A. 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* A copy of the supplemental response is provided as an enclosure with this letter.

If you do not think that the statement you recently mailed sufficiently addresses this supplemental response, you may file a second statement with the Department. The Department will not adjust its timeline for its required resolution to the complaint. If you choose to submit a second statement, please send it within 10 business days of the date of this letter to the Bureau of Elections, Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori A. Bourbonais".

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Michele Economou Ureste

April 14, 2016

Department of State
Secretary of State
Richard H. Austin Building
1st Floor
430 W. Allegan
Lansing, MI 48918
Attention: Lori Bourbonais, Bureau of Elections

Dear Lori,

I am respectfully responding to the allegations set forth by Ben Ohly regarding campaign finance. I have always respected the separation between personal and township business.

The township twitter had 850 subscribers, rather than 144 (which were actual tweets), and I wish to provide this accurate information. Twitter has always been used by me for media updates. The last time that I used twitter was to report that the township offices would be closed on February 25 due to the winter storm. On March 6, when I created my personal website, I did not remember that my last login for twitter was on the township twitter. It was an honest mistake.

My fundraising efforts are limited to personal fundraiser events, and I generally subsidize with my personal funds for my election. I have never received a contribution by any other means, other than a personal fundraiser event. My personal website is a template that may suggest to donate, but there is no pay pal or like funding mechanism on my personal website.

Sincerely,

Michela Economou Vreste, M.P.A.

West Bloomfield Township Supervisor

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
2016 APR 14 PM 3:40
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL

March 31, 2016

Department of State
Secretary of State
Richard H. Austin Building
1st Floor
430 W. Allegan
Lansing, MI 48918
Attention: Lori Bourbonais, Bureau of Elections

Dear Lori,

I am respectfully responding to the allegations set forth by Ben Ohly regarding campaign finance. I have always respected the separation between personal and township business.

The township twitter has only 144 subscribers, primarily media outlets. I have only used twitter to build awareness for township events. Media would not at all be interested in my personal website. There is absolutely no benefit to me between township twitter media subscribers and my personal web site, which I recently created through godaddy.com. When my personal website was created it automatically asked if I wanted to link it to facebook, linkedin and twitter and I clicked "yes" to all three. What I did not double check was that the last time I used twitter, I was logged on the township twitter. It was an honest mistake.

My fundraising efforts are limited to personal fundraiser events, and I generally donate my personal funds for my election. I have never received a contribution by any other means, other than a personal fundraiser event. My personal website is a template that may suggest to donate, but there is no pay pal or like funding mechanism on my personal website.

Sincerely,

Michele Economou Vreste, M.P.A.

West Bloomfield Township Supervisor

2016 APR 12 AM 9:13
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

April 20, 2016

Michele Economou Ureste
7298 Colony Drive
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48323

Dear Ms. Ureste:

This letter concerns the complaint that was recently filed against you, which relates to a purported violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* The Department of State has received a rebuttal statement from the complainant, a copy of which is enclosed with this letter.

Section 15(10) of the MCFA, MCL 169.215(10), requires the Department to determine within 45 business days from the receipt of the rebuttal statement whether there is a reason to believe that a violation of the Act has occurred. Mr. Ohly's complaint remains under investigation at this time. At the conclusion of the review, all parties will receive written notice of the outcome of the complaint.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori A. Bourbonais".

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Ben Ohly

April 13, 2016

Attn: Secretary of State

Dear Lori Bourbonais,

Thank for your sending me the response from Mrs. Ureste.

For someone who has been in office for 7 years, in her second term, I would think Mrs. Ureste would know that utilizing township resources including official social media sites to promote her "personal campaign page" is a violation of campaign law. For example, a Senator running for President cannot use their official Senate page to promote their campaign or solicit donations to their upcoming campaign.

What is strange to me is Mrs. Ureste's admission of guilt in writing "It was a mistake, or..." Given the recent behavior of government officials in Michigan from Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick to those responsible for the Flint water crisis, it's concerning that Mrs. Ureste would acknowledge her violation but then somehow belittle it by downplaying the number or type of subscribers to official township resources. This portion of her response is irrelevant to the clear violation. While mistakes happen, it's necessary for penalties and the rule of law to fairly and equally apply to all citizens including elected officials.

I appreciate the state's investigation into this matter and hope an appropriate penalty is imposed. On the posting, Mrs. Ureste does not delineate the difference between the Township and herself, as it addresses the announcement from herself in the first person narrative: "I've just published my website, check it out at michelleconomouuruste.com" (which goes right to a page that contains a press release about her third term campaign announcement as well as a phone number soliciting for donations to her campaign). It is clear that she violated the law by putting campaign material on a taxpayer-funded social media account.

According to public information, Mrs. Ureste has also committed other counts of campaign violations and this correspondence is one of many. As a concerned resident of West Bloomfield, these constant abuses of the law illustrate a lack of Mrs. Ureste's respect for the residents and the office of Township Supervisor.

Sincerely,



Ben Ohly
Concerned Resident of West Bloomfield

4904 Hardwoods Drive
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
2016 APR 19 PM 3:24
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL



STATE OF MICHIGAN
RUTH JOHNSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

May 16, 2016

Michele Economou Ureste
7298 Colony Drive
West Bloomfield, MI 48323

Dear Ms. Economou Ureste:

The Department of State (Department) has completed its investigation of the complaint filed against you by Ben Ohly, which alleged a violation of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.201 *et seq.* This letter concerns the disposition of Mr. Ohly's complaint.

The MCFA and corresponding administrative rules require the Department to ascertain whether there may be "reason to believe that a violation of this act has occurred." MCL 169.215(10), R 169.55(3). If the Department finds that there may be "reason to believe that a violation of this act has occurred[.]" the Department is required by law to "endeavor to correct the violation or prevent a further violation by using informal methods." *Id.*

The MCFA prohibits a public body or an individual acting on its behalf from "us[ing] or authoriz[ing] the use of funds, personnel, office space, computer hardware or software, property, stationery, postage, vehicles, equipment, supplies, or other public resources to make a contribution or expenditure." MCL 169.257(1).

Mr. Ohly filed his complaint on March 22, 2016. You filed written responses on April 1 and April 12, 2016, and Mr. Ohly filed a rebuttal statement on April 19, 2016.

Mr. Ohly alleged that you unlawfully used "official township social media to publicize [your] candidacy and request donations." In support of his complaint, Mr. Ohly provided a screen shot of the West Bloomfield Township Twitter feed, which included a tweet which stated, "I've just published my website, check it out at micheleconomouureste.com [.]" and a screen shot of your website which listed a phone number and stated, "Call to Donate [.]"

In your responses you stated that you use the Township Twitter account for media updates, and the last time you had used the account "was to report that the township offices would be closed on February 25 due to the winter storm." You further stated that subsequently, when you created your personal website on March 6, 2016 you did not remember that your last login for Twitter was with the township account. You stated that when you created your personal website it asked "if [you] wanted to link it to [F]acebook, [L]inked[I]n and [T]witter [.]" and you answered "yes" to all three. You stated that you had not double checked which account you used the last time you logged into Twitter. Finally, you stated that you generally use your own funds for campaigning and that you only receive contributions through personal fundraising events. While

Michele Economou Ureste
May 16, 2016
Page 2

there is a number on your website to call for donations, you noted that “there is no pay pal or like funding mechanism” on the website.

It appears from a review of the tweet, it was sent on March 6, 2016, which was a Sunday. The Department also notes that after a review of the Oakland County candidate listing, it appears that you are no longer running for public office this year.

Based on your admission that you mistakenly used the township Twitter account to send one tweet regarding your website outside of regular business hours, the Department finds that because a township resource was used to advertise your campaign website, the evidence tends to support a conclusion that a violation of the Act has occurred. After making this determination, the Department must now attempt to resolve the matter informally. MCL 169.215(10). The purpose of an informal resolution is to “to correct the violation or prevent a further violation [.]” *Id.*

The Department notes that while use of the township Twitter account was improper, a review of the tweet shows that it was not sent during normal business hours, and the Department believes this warning letter is an appropriate resolution to this matter.

The Department reminds you that it is unlawful for a public body, or an individual acting on its behalf, to use or authorize the use of equipment, supplies, personnel, funds, or other public resources to make a contribution or expenditure. This notice may be used in future proceedings as evidence that tends to establish a knowing violation of the Act should you commit a violation of the MCFA in the future. A knowing violation a misdemeanor offense and may merit a referral for criminal enforcement action. MCL 169.257(4).

Sincerely,



Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Ben Ohly