

COMMISSIONER EMPLOYMENT INQUIRY
DRAFT FINDINGS
JULY 20, 2023

BACKGROUND

As a result of the YouTube chat conversation during the last Commission meeting, Commissioner Rebecca Szetela requested that the Commission review Commissioner Anthony Eid's employment with Michigan Voices at its July meeting.

PROCESS

Since the Executive Director is responsible for providing meeting materials for the Commission, Executive Director Edward Woods III requested assistance from Commissioner Douglas J. Clark, Jr. (chairperson) and Commissioner Steven T. Lett (legal liaison) in addressing this agenda item. Here's the process the group used.

- Reviewed the Constitution, Rules and Procedures, Conflict of Interests, and Code of Conduct.
- Searched Lobbyist and Michigan Campaign Finance Committee databases on the Michigan Department of State's website.
- Searched Transparency USA database.
- Considered concerns raised by Commissioners individually.
- Reached out to Commissioner Anthony Eid
- Reached out to Michigan Voices.
- Consulted with the Michigan Department of State.
- Discussed and requested a review from our attorneys.

CONSTITUTION

In assessing the [Constitution](#), the group reviewed the following.

1. "Not currently be...a paid consultant or employee of a federal, state, or local elected official or political candidate, of a federal, state, or local political candidate's campaign, or a political action committee." (Article IV, Section 6(1)(b)(iv))
2. "Any person who is registered as a lobbyist agent with the Michigan bureau of elections, or any employee of such person." (Article IV, Section 6(1)(b)(vi))

RULES OF PROCEDURES

Through an evaluation of the [Rules of Procedures](#), the group considered the following.

1. Section 3:2 regarding Eligibility which mirrors the Constitutional language.
2. Section 3:4 regarding Vacate Office.
3. Section 3:6 regarding Duties of Members.

4. Section 3:8 regarding Conflict of Interest.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

We considered the following from the [Conflict of Interest](#) policy.

1. D. Policy, Section 3a. "Consistently act in a manner that upholds and advances personal and professional honor, integrity, and the public's trust in the Agents and the MICRC."
2. D, Policy, Section 3c. "Refrain from engaging in conduct that could be reasonably perceived to call into question the honesty, integrity, and professionalism of the Agent of the MICRC."

CODE OF CONDUCT

In evaluating the [Code of Conduct](#), we considered the following.

1. Part B
2. Part C
3. Part F
4. Part G

MICHIGAN VOICES

The group searched the Michigan Department of State [Lobbyist](#) and [Michigan Campaign Finance Committee](#) databases and found no record of Michigan Voices or Commissioner Eid. In addition to these databases, the group checked [Transparency USA](#) for the 2020 and 2022 election cycles. In the 2022 election cycle, Michigan Voices received \$58,381 from Reproductive Freedom for All.

As it relates to the Form 990s, the Michigan Voices became an independent nonprofit organization in 2021. We reviewed the Form 990 for 2021. The Form 990 for 2022 was not complete. We found no concerns in reviewing this document.

Response to organization identity and source of funding to pay Commissioner Eid.

"Michigan Voices is a 501 (c)(3) organization. We do not have a political action committee (PAC), a lobbyist, or a lobbying agent."

"As an employee of Michigan Voices, Anthony Eid's compensation comes directly from Michigan Voices."

WKAR Interview response

"Meanwhile, Michigan Voices Executive Director Sommer Foster emphasized she had no prior contact with Eid before he applied."

"We had an open application process, and the job was posted for about three to four months before we made a hiring decision. We had several applicants apply and went through a four-

step interview process,” Foster said in an email. “We hired Anthony Eid because we believe that he was the best applicant for the position.”

Response to website posting regarding interaction with MICRC

“Any partner that engaged with the commission did so at a public meeting, and centered around their communities of interest.”

“There are three comments that I can think of where that applies. I am not sure which version of the maps these comments apply to.”

“1) LGBT Detroit asked the commission to keep the LGBTQ community together at Six Mile and Woodward.”

“2) APIA Vote asked the commission to keep the Bengali community together.”

“3) Oakland Forward made comments that the City of Pontiac didn’t belong in a district with Waterford or Auburn Hills.”

“Our partners engaged in public comment whenever possible. Some partners were happy with the end result of the maps, some participated in lawsuits and/or protests because they did not like the final versions, and some believe that the maps violated the VRA and diluted Black political power.”

“We believe that citizen participation was a critical part of the process, and part of the reason for the formation of the redistricting commission. Our role was to ensure that historically disenfranchised and/or marginalized communities were able to participate in the process. All partners defined for themselves how they view their communities of interest, in alignment with the Michigan constitution.”

FINDINGS

At this time, our attorneys have no concerns on this matter.

As a group, here is a report of our findings at this time.

1. We found no violations of the Constitution.
2. We found no violations of the Rules of Procedures.
3. We found no violations of the Conflict of Interest.
4. We found no violations of the Code of Conduct.
5. In our communication and review of information provided by Michigan Voices, we found no violations.

If the Commission has to draw maps, we will need to revisit any potential conflict of interest.