



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

January 24, 2017

Sunny Sahu  
Citizens for Sunny Sahu  
7414 Starbrook Street  
Portage, Michigan 49024

Kathi Valeii  
471 Egleston Avenue  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001

Dear Mr. Sahu and Ms. Valeii:

The Department of State (Department) received a formal complaint filed by Zachary Lassiter against you, alleging that you violated section 47(1) of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.247(1), by failing to include a complete and correct identification statement certain campaign material. A copy of the complaint is provided as an enclosure with this letter.

The MCFA and corresponding administrative rules require a person who produces printed material that relates to an election to include the phrase "Paid for by [name and address of the person who paid for the item]." MCL 169.247(1), Mich. Admin. R 169.36(2).

In support of his complaint, Mr. Lassiter provided copy of an article written by Ms. Valeii which states, "know who you're voting for [,]" "I'll be voting for Sunny Sahu [,]" and "he is the best candidate for the job [,]" It appears that the paid-for-by statement is omitted from the article. Mr. Lassiter also provided a copy of one page from the Citizens for Sunny Sahu Committee's 2016 Pre-Election campaign finance statement expenditure schedule which shows a payment to Kathi Valeii for "communications consultation."

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 the complaint, you are required to do so within 15 business days of the date of this letter. Please include any evidence that reflects any corrective measures you have taken to bring your campaign material into compliance with the MCFA. 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan**

Sunny Sahu  
Kathi Valeii  
January 24, 2017  
Page 2

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 reply will be provided to Mr. Lassiter, 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 penalty provided in section 47(6) of the Act.

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

Sincerely,

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

Lori A. Bourbonais  
Bureau of Elections  
Michigan Department of State

c: Zachary Lassiter

Michigan Department of State

Bureau of Elections

Lansing, MI

RECEIVED/FILED  
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE  
2016 NOV 16 PM 3:23  
ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL

|                                |   |                      |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| In The Matter of:              | ) |                      |
|                                | ) |                      |
| Citizens for Sunny Sahu        | ) | COMPLAINT FOR        |
| Committee ID # 54979           | ) | VIOLATION OF         |
| 7414 Starbrook Street          | ) | SECTION 47           |
| Portage, MI 49024              | ) | OF THE MICHIGAN      |
| Violator                       | ) | CAMPAIGN FINANCE ACT |
|                                | ) |                      |
| -&-                            | ) |                      |
|                                | ) |                      |
| Kathi Valeii                   | ) |                      |
| 471 Egleston Ave               | ) |                      |
| Kalamazoo, MI 49001            | ) |                      |
| Violator                       | ) |                      |
|                                | ) |                      |
| Zachary Lassiter (269)389-0176 | ) |                      |
| PO BOX 51644                   | ) |                      |
| Kalamazoo, MI 49005            | ) |                      |
| Complainant                    | ) |                      |
|                                | ) |                      |

-THIS COMPLAINT INVOLVES NEW CONDUCT JUST COMMITTED LAST NIGHT-

JURISDICTION

1. Sunny Sahu is a candidate for the office of Kalamazoo County Treasurer, meeting the requirements of a candidate under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.
2. Sahu Formed the Committee "Citizens for Sunny Sahu" Committee ID 54979 and is a committee regulated by the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

ALLEGATIONS

3. CITIZENS FOR SUNNY SAHU employed and paid KATHI VALEII to write articles online that encourage voters to vote for SUNNY SAHU but do not contain the required disclaimer and therefore violate Section 47 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

STATEMENTS OF FACT

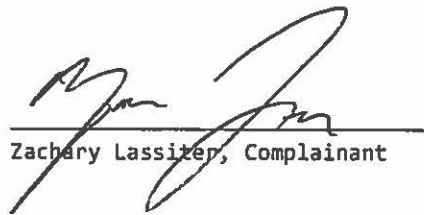
4. According to Pre Election Campaign Finance Statements filed October 28th 2016 with the Kalamazoo County Clerk by CITIZENS FOR SUNNY SAHU, KATHI VALEII is paid employee or contractor of the campaign. SEE EXHIBIT 1

In the Matter of CITIZENS FOR SUNNY SAHU, VALEII

5. In the late afternoon or early evening hours of November 7th 2016 KATHI VALEII published an article on the website Medium.com entitled "You should be shocked by the Trump of Kalamazoo - Let's get partisanship and bigotry out of the Treasurer's office on Tuesday. Kalamazoo doesn't need its very own Trump." SEE EXHIBIT 2
6. The article can be found at  
<https://medium.com/@kathivaleii/you-should-be-shocked-by-the-trump-of-kalamazoo-88ea8ddb6c6f#.19opi0jxn>
7. The article advocates for readers to vote for SUNNY SAHU, whom KATHI VALEII is a paid employee and/or contractor of.
8. There is no disclaimer stating that the article was funded by CITIZENS FOR SUNNY SAHU.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, formed after a reasonable inquiry under the circumstances, each factual contention of the complaint is supported by evidence.



Zachary Lassiter, Complainant

Nov 8th 2016



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BUREAU OF ELECTIONS

Exhibit I

ITEMIZED EXPENDITURES  
SCHEDULE 1B  
CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

1. Committee I. D. Number 54979  
2. Committee Name Citizens for Sunny Sahu

| 3. Name and address of person or vendor to whom paid   | 4. Purpose (Required information)   | 5. Date                 | 6. Amount  |
|--|---|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Expenditure #1</b><br>Name <u>Jennifer Judd</u><br>Address<br><u>1318 Hillcrest Ave.</u><br><u>Kalamazoo, MI 49008</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser              | Purpose: <u>Consulting Fee/CM</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement           | <u>09/15/16</u><br>Date | <u>\$ 750.00</u><br>Click Here for Memo Itemization Type <input type="button" value="v"/>  |
| <b>Expenditure #2</b><br>Name <u>Kathi Valeii</u><br>Address<br><u>471 Egleson Ave.</u><br><u>Kalamazoo, MI 49001</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser                  | Purpose: <u>Communications Consultation</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement | <u>09/15/16</u><br>Date | <u>\$ 60.00</u><br>Click Here for Memo Itemization Type <input type="button" value="v"/>   |
| <b>Expenditure #3</b><br>Name <u>Jennifer Judd</u><br>Address<br><u>1318 Hillcrest Ave.</u><br><u>Kalamazoo, MI 49008</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser              | Purpose: <u>Consulting/CM</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement               | <u>09/21/16</u><br>Date | <u>\$ 250.00</u><br>Click Here for Memo Itemization Type <input type="button" value="v"/>  |
| <b>Expenditure #4</b><br>Name <u>Jennifer Judd</u><br>Address<br><u>1318 Hillcrest Ave.</u><br><u>Kalamazoo, MI 49008</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser              | Purpose: <u>Consulting/CM</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement               | <u>09/26/16</u><br>Date | <u>\$ 1500.00</u><br>Click Here for Memo Itemization Type <input type="button" value="v"/> |
| <b>Expenditure #5</b><br>Name <u>Squarespace</u><br>Address<br><u>225 Varick St.</u><br><u>12th Floor</u><br><u>New York, NY 10014</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser | Purpose: <u>Web Hosting</u><br><input type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement                 | <u>09/27/16</u><br>Date | <u>\$ 16.00</u><br>Click Here for Memo Itemization Type <input type="button" value="v"/>   |

Subtotal this page

**\$2,576.00**

Grand Total of all Schedules 1B  
(Complete on last page of Schedule)

Enter this total

Exhibit 2



Kathi Valeii

Follow

13 hrs ago · 4 min read

## You should be shocked by the Trump of Kalamazoo

*Let's get partisanship and bigotry out of the Treasurer's office on Tuesday. Kalamazoo doesn't need its very own Trump.*



Courtesy of Kalamazoo County Democratic Party

I was canvassing yesterday, and I had a conversation with someone who said that, yes, they planned to vote for our local Dem candidates, but they were still considering voting Republican on treasurer.

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, Mary does a good job, I think ... I mean, she's a Trump supporter and that's bad news, but if she keeps her politics out of the office...."

Right.

The trouble with separating politics from the office is that when your ideologies are rooted in the kind of bigotry that fall in line with a Trump platform, those biases can't help but bleed into one's everyday life.

If Mary Balkema isn't troubled by the sexism, racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia of the Trump campaign, she's blatantly unfit to be our County's treasurer.

Mary Balkema isn't just a Trump supporter, though—she is an out and proud Trump delegate.



Incumbent treasurer, Mary Balkema, at the RNC, as a Trump Delegate

Not once has Balkema publicly spoken out against Trump's bigotry. Nor has she joined many within her party who have rescinded their support of the Republican candidate for his outlandish comments about women, immigrants, Muslims, and his general propensity to fuel hatred.

Instead, in the days following the leak of Trump's bragging about sexually assaulting women, Balkema doubled down on her support by joining the Michigan Women for Trump Leadership Team.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
October 12, 2016

Contact: Tim Lineberger  
tlineberger@donaldtrump.com

#### Trump-Pence Announces Michigan Women For Trump Leadership Team

(LANSING, MI) – Today, the Trump-Pence Michigan campaign announced the Michigan Women for Trump Leadership Team. The Women's Leadership Team will assist the campaign with advisory work and outreach across the Great Lakes State.

"It's an honor to work with such amazing and talented women across the Great Lakes State in support of Mr. Trump. As a proud mother, grandmother, wife, and small business owner, I will be voting for Donald Trump on November 8<sup>th</sup> because he is the change agent and problem-solver our country desperately needs.

"Whether its jobs, the economy, public safety, education, child care, or national security, women around Michigan and the entire country know that Donald Trump is the only candidate who is with us on the issues that matter. With Donald Trump as President, women will have a champion in the White House who relentlessly fights for our families every day."

-- Kathy Berden, RNC National Committeewoman, Snover

#### Co - Chairs

Kathy Berden -- RNC National Committeewoman, Snover

Lena Epstein -- Co-Owner of Vesco Oil Corporation and Michigan Donald Trump State Co-Chair, Bloomfield Hills

Linda Lee Tarver -- President of the Republican Women's Federation of Michigan and Michigan Donald Trump State Co-Chair, Lansing

#### Advisory Committee

Mary Balkema -- Kalamazoo County Treasurer, Kalamazoo

Diane Carey -- New York Times Best Selling Author, Owosso

Senator Judy Emmons -- State Senator for the 33<sup>rd</sup> District, Sheridan

Ana Maria Guzman -- President of Mid-Michigan Republican Women's Club, Lansing

Diane Hoekstra -- Holland

Kim Hoppe -- President of Michigan Republican Women's Club, Ypsilanti

Cathy Kirk -- 9<sup>th</sup> District Republican Executive Committee, Clinton Township

Ernest H. Mason -- Former President of Bloomfield/Birmingham Republican Women's Club, Dearborn

Mary Balkema represents the extremism of the Republican far right. Balkema belongs to a base that has fallen out of touch with everyday Americans—even those within her own party.

And when your position holds the power of determining which people get to stay in their homes and which ones don't, alliances to political candidates whose platforms are rooted in bigotry matters. And it matters a lot.

But it's not just Mary's Trump delegacy and Trump leadership roles that should concern Kalamazoo voters. It is her own actions and words that she has used to repeatedly exploit the most marginalized in Kalamazoo County.



## Efforts against the LGBT anti-discrimination ordinance

**Vote NO to DISCRIMINATION**

Do you want to discriminate against local business and organizations like the Boy Scouts, Salvation Army and others? **NO!** Do you want your daughter, sister, girlfriend, wife, mother or grandmother to share a bathroom with a cross dressing man? **NO!** Do you want to suppress free speech and expression rights against your neighbor? **NO!**

**[www.responsiblevoters.org](http://www.responsiblevoters.org)**

**Kalamazoo Citizens Voting**

**"NO"**

**to Special Rights Discrimination**

Produced by Responsible Citizens Voting to Out Special Rights Discrimination  
101 N. W. 4th • Kalamazoo, MI 49001 • www.responsiblevoters.org • 269.221.1154

Image of a pamphlet of opposition to anti-discrimination

In 2009, Mary Balkema led efforts to defeat a ballot measure that would make discrimination against the LGBT community illegal. During that campaign, Balkema, in reference to her transphobic propaganda material, was quoted as saying:

*"I'm a politician and I know how to campaign," said Mary Balkema, of the opposition group. "And it is an attention-getter and it's shocking. And it should shock you to see a man in a skirt in a women's bathroom. It should be shocking."*

But, the reality is, trans people who are just trying to use the bathroom aren't shocking.

What is, indeed, shocking, is Mary Balkema's exclusionary and oppressive dogma around which people deserve equal protection and which ones don't.

As a politician who supposedly "knows how to campaign," showcasing one's bigotry like this was probably the most shocking (and revealing) PR move of all time.

## Calling the Northside "the wrong side of the tracks"

In an article for Encore Magazine in 2015, Balkema, talking about a Land Bank home that she sold on the Northside, was quoted as saying:

*"The first house I sold on Rose was to a white schoolteacher who I told, 'You know this is the wrong side of the tracks for most people.'"*

You can use your deductive reasoning skills to determine which people in Balkema's world are "most people."

Balkema's comments to a prospective home-buyer are way more problematic than revealing personal biases. Gary Swartz, a real estate professional, put it this way:

*"As a realtor, I am held to a very high standard of practice with regards to Fair Housing and the Civil Rights Act of 1968. It is a subject that I must take very seriously. Steering is born of a prejudice and promotes division"*

*and entrenchment of bias. The comments Balkema made to the potential home-buyer on the Northside would be considered steering in my profession and a Fair Housing violation. Ms. Balkema's prejudice had the potential to deny both social and economic opportunity, for that individual as much as the community. She is wrong on both sides."*

## **Facing a lawsuit for alleged fair housing violations**

In October 2016, a lawsuit was filed against Mary Balkema and Kalamazoo County that alleges discrimination and Fair Housing violations.

## **Who do you want your vote to represent?**

When you vote on Tuesday, know who you're voting for, and who they will represent. I want someone who will represent ALL the people. That's why I'll be voting for Sunny Sahu—because he is the best candidate for the job, AND he believes that everyone deserves equal protection.



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

February 13, 2017

Zachary Lassiter  
P.O. Box 51644  
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49005

Dear Mr. Lassiter:

The Department of State received a response to the complaint you filed against Citizens for Sunny Sahu and Kathi Valeii, 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 430 West Allegan Street, Lansing, Michigan 48918.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Bourbonais  
Bureau of Elections  
Michigan Department of State

c: Sunny Sahu  
Kathi Valeii

Sunny Sahu  
Citizens for Sunny Sahu  
P.O. Box 19731  
Kalamazoo, MI 49019  
269-808-3140

2017 FEB 13 AM 10:51  
ELECTIONS/CLERK

Lori A. Bourbonais  
Department of State  
Bureau of Elections  
Richard H. Austin Building, 1st Floor  
430 West Allegan St.  
Lansing, MI 48918

February 9, 2017

Dear Ms. Bourbonais:

Thank you for your letter-inquiry and for the opportunity to respond.

Zachary Lassiter is an avid seeker of social media attention who is quickly becoming a serial *pro se* complainant. Lassiter's only challenge is to a \$60.00 payment on September 15 for two hours of discounted media consulting services in the midst of a relatively high-profile county campaign. There is absolutely no connection between Valeii's short consulting services and her blog post two months later, and no good reason for any reasonable person to think there is – especially in light of the substantial media activity that occurred in the meantime.<sup>1</sup> One of Lassiter's Reddit readers immediately recognized his complaints as "petty nonsense," (Exh. 18). His allegations are legally frivolous, and if he were an attorney, they would be sanctionable for lack of a reasonable investigation.

Lassiter should be admonished for dragging ordinary citizens into his web. To some degree, candidates unfortunately expose themselves to unreasonable questions by putting themselves in the race. But to levy these accusations against ordinary citizens is a level lower. It is the kind of personally harassing and distressing conduct that discourages ordinary people from having anything to do with our democratic process. The claim should be dismissed, and Lassiter should be admonished about the requirement to conduct a more thorough inquiry before filing a complaint.

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<sup>1</sup> By contrast, our campaign has not challenged my opponent, Mary Balkema's, payment of \$400 to the mLive media outlet in the last reporting period, even though the venue printed articles favorable to her, since that would be just about as petty as Lassiter's allegations.

## **FACTS**

***Mid-September Engagement.*** Valeii's contractual engagement with the campaign was made, fulfilled, and paid within a few days in September 2016, long before the unconnected personal writings in November, which Lassiter attacks.

In early September, I received information from fellow elected officials and candidates that Mary Balkema, my opponent in the Kalamazoo County Treasurer's race, approached them with information she apparently intended to use in a negative campaign against me. My campaign had always anticipated that Balkema and her team would be particularly negative and vindictive. We had discussed general strategy, but Balkema's particular overtures prompted an immediate and targeted response, including a press release and radio efforts.

I am informed that my campaign manager, Jennifer Judd, arranged and contracted with Kathi Valeii to provide a couple hours of media-strategy consulting resources for the campaign's September response. On or about September 14, 2016, I met with Judd and Valeii to discuss that immediate strategy, including a letter to the editor. I am informed that the campaign paid Valeii \$60 for her time that night, per her agreement with Judd. Subsequently, we drafted and submitted a "letter to the editor" to mLive, which apparently was not published. That completed all campaign activity related in any way to the \$60. Moreover, Valeii did not write her November blog post as my employee or agent in any way.

***Bad Faith.*** For reasons below, Lassiter's allegations seem to originate in bad faith.

Lassiter was attacking Ms. Valeii on social media at least since mid-August when she wrote a blog entry reporting the concerns that Commissioners Matthew Milcarek and Shannon Sykes had about the Foundation for Excellence's proposed payments to the City of Kalamazoo, before details were known. Her same blog also reported the views of people who voiced support for the Foundation's proposal. Apparently Valeii, Milcarek and Sykes all earned Lassiter's personal animosity as a result of that article. On August 15, 2016, he posted "Wow. Kathi Valeii wrote the attack piece attacking our city on behalf of Commissioners Matt Milcarek and Shannon Sykes . . ." (Exh. 1) Later, he would include Valeii and Milcarek in another frivolous campaign finance violation complaint.

A month before complaining about me, Lassiter already proudly announced his endorsement of Balkema. On October 6, mLive ran an article entitled *Kalamazoo County treasurer faces lawyer in re-election bid*. (Exh. 2) The next day, on October 7, Lassiter wrote: "Who I'm voting for at this point . . . Treasurer: Mary Balkema." (Exh. 3.) Soon, the publicity heated up. On October 13, 2016, mLive published two articles. One advertised a debate between us, (Exh. 4), but a more controversial second article discussed a recent federal lawsuit against Balkema: *Kalamazoo County and Mary Balkema sued for housing discrimination*. (Exh. 5.) Among other things, the lawsuit (which remains pending) ostensibly alleges that Balkema gave preferential

tax treatment to her husband in comparison with her treatment of the plaintiff and others, in violation of federal law.

The next day, Lassiter shot back to defend Balkema. In his October 14 post (Exh. 6), he again declared "I will be voting for Mary Balkema," he attacked Commissioner Milcarek for posting the federal complaint on social media, and he attacked me and Commissioner Milcarek in a rant. To be clear, I had no contact with Commissioner Milcarek about the lawsuit or the complaint.

By October 20, Balkema's negative campaign was in full swing. MLive published two competing articles entitled, *County treasurer candidate's arrest, tax history become campaign issue*, and *County treasurer candidate can 'absolutely be bonded,' campaign says*. (Exh. 7, 8.) Lassiter published the former article against me (which is his right to do), stating, "Ouch... . . . just another reason to vote Mary Balkema." (Exh. 9.)

On October 24, Lassiter continued his rant against Milcarek. In two posts, he lauded the Foundation for Excellence, declared Milcarek unelectable, and asked others to run because "Matt Milcarek needs to get out of city government." (Exh. 10.)

On October 30, Lassiter began a string of petty complaints. He proudly announced on FaceBook that he filed a complaint against Library Board candidate Keith Nelson, as if it were a major media event. Lassiter charged that although Nelson's order of 50 yard signs disclosed that they were paid for by his campaign committee, they did not include the address. Lassiter proclaimed: "In my effort to hold candidates for public office accountable I just filed my first Michigan Campaign Finance Act Complaint against a candidate's committee." (Exh. 11.) When Lassiter also published this to Reddit, another reader told Lassiter that "like an adult" the reader had already contacted the candidate, who was re-labeling the signs to include the address. "Even my kids know this," wrote the reader. (Exh. 12.) Lassiter's self-aggrandizing social media event was an avoidable waste.

By the time he filed his complaints against my campaign, Lassiter apparently was not faring well. By November 1, he was publishing ugly fights with his "ex," (Exh. 13), and on November 6, 2016, he strangely disclosed that "[f]or the last few months I've been sleeping 20 hours a day. I wish I could say it's refreshing." (Exh 14.)

During this time period, mLive posted an article citing insurance professionals who noted that the issues in Balkema's negative campaign were not the impassable barrier she claimed: *Record won't stop county treasurer candidate from bonding, agents say*. (Exh. 15.) Lassiter responded with fire. On November 7, 2016, he relied on the same false and frivolous allegation that \$60 somehow retained Valeii's services for life to file another complaint, which he published on social media saying, "People of Kalamazoo County, A Campaign Finance Violation has been filed against Kathi Valeii, Citizens for Sunny Sahu and Matt Milcarek." (Exh.



16.) Piling on, he separately and falsely posted, "Another reason to vote Mary Balkema, her opponent Sunny Sahu committed campaign finance violations." And again he piled on as if his social media audience hadn't heeded his clarion call: "Attached is the complaint against Commissioner Milcarek that I mentioned tonight." (Exh. 17.) When he published the matter on Reddit, Readers appropriately responded that it was "petty nonsense." (Exh. 18.) That same day, Valeii posted her personal blog entry, about which he complains here.

The next day, on Election Day November 8, Lassiter persisted. He falsely and frivolously claimed that the campaign "still continued to commit campaign finance violations. And yet another reason to vote Mary Balkema." (Exh. 19.) That evening, when mLive declared Balkema the winner, Lassiter shared its article and wrote, "Congratulations Mary Balkema." (Exh. 20.)

### LAW

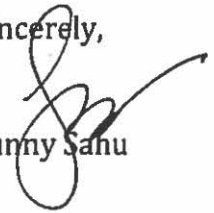
Section 169.247(1) only requires a "printed matter . . . refer[ring] to an election, a candidate, or a ballot question" to identify "the name and address of the *person paying for the matter.*" (Emphasis added.) I did not pay for Ms. Valeii's November blog post. My campaign did not pay for Ms. Valeii's November blog post. Although Ms. Valeii freely disclosed her support for me in her post, subsection (1) did not require her to disclose a ***payment that did not exist.***

Moreover, and consistent with the First Amendment, section 169.247(1) provides: "An individual other than a candidate is not subject to this subsection if the individual is acting independently and not acting as an agent for a candidate or any committee." Under the express terms of subsection (1), the subsection simply does not apply to Ms. Valeii or her November blog post.

### CONCLUSION

My campaign favors increased transparency from all sides, and Lassiter is welcome to advocate for whichever candidate he likes. But he should not be allowed to wield this forum as a partisan weapon, especially against ordinary citizens. Lassiter's willingness to ignore allegations about the candidate he supports, while embracing those against her opponent reveals a bias that has infected his frivolous allegations here. Each administrative and judicial body has the inherent authority to manage its own proceedings consistent with its other rules. To avoid a chilling effect on the First Amendment rights of ordinary citizens, Lassiter should be admonished to conduct a thorough and reasonable investigation before levying accusations against non-candidates such as Ms. Valeii.

Sincerely,

  
Sunny Sahu

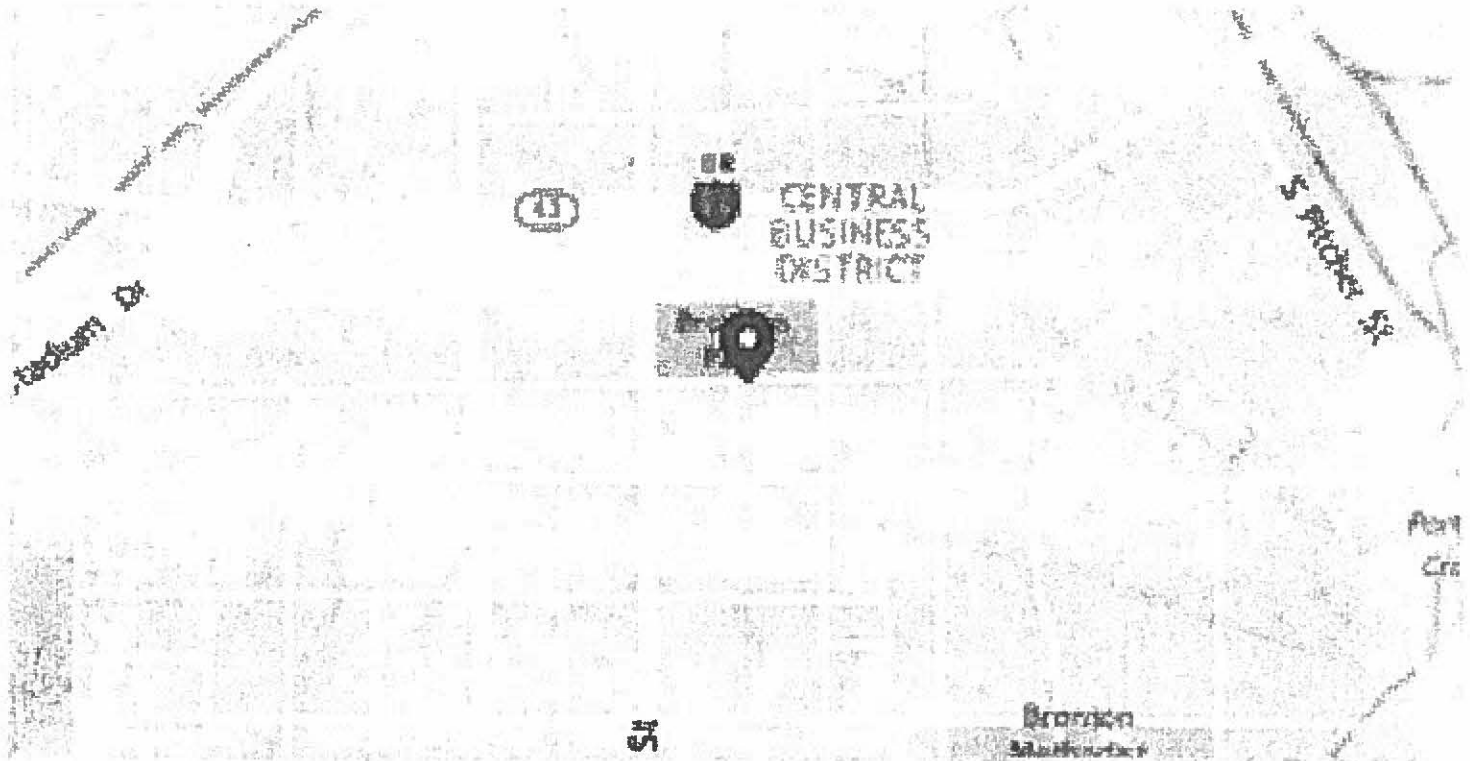




Zachary Lassiter at Kalamazoo City Hall

August 15, 2016 · Kalamazoo · MI

Wow. Kathi Valell who wrote the attack piece attacking our city on behalf of Commissioners Matt Micarek and Shannon Sykes refused to stand during the Pledge of Allegiance at the commission meeting. She instead was typing a Facebook Status on her phone. #KeepItClassy



Kalamazoo City Hall

City Hall - Kalamazoo

Melody Daason and 3 others have been here

Save

Like

Comment

Share



Write a comment...



## Kalamazoo County treasurer faces lawyer in re-election bid

20



0 shares



Mary Balkema, left, and Sunny Sahu, right, are running for Kalamazoo County Treasurer.



By Malachi Barrett | mbarrett1@mlive.com

on October 06, 2016 at 1:13 PM, updated October 06, 2016 at 1:14 PM

Print  
Email

KALAMAZOO, MI -- Kalamazoo County Treasurer Mary Balkema is running for re-election against a relative newcomer to politics in Kalamazoo.

Republican candidate Mary Balkema, 49, has served as treasurer since 2007.

### MICHIGAN'S BEST



27 bowling alleys we'll visit on our search for Michigan's Best

- 12 reasons to visit bowling centers in West Michigan

Von Washington Jr and Jon Hoadley were mentioned in this



**Zachary Lassiter**

October 7, 2016 · 21

Who I'm voting for at this point.

POTUS: Hillary Clinton

Congressional: Fred Upton

Legislative: Jon Hoadley

Prosecutor: Jeff Gettling, Kalamazoo County Prosecutor

Clerk: Tim Snow

Sheriff: Commissioner Jeff Heppler

Treasurer: Mary Balkema

Kalamazoo Valley Community College Trustees: Von Washington Jr.

 Jon Hoadley and 1 other

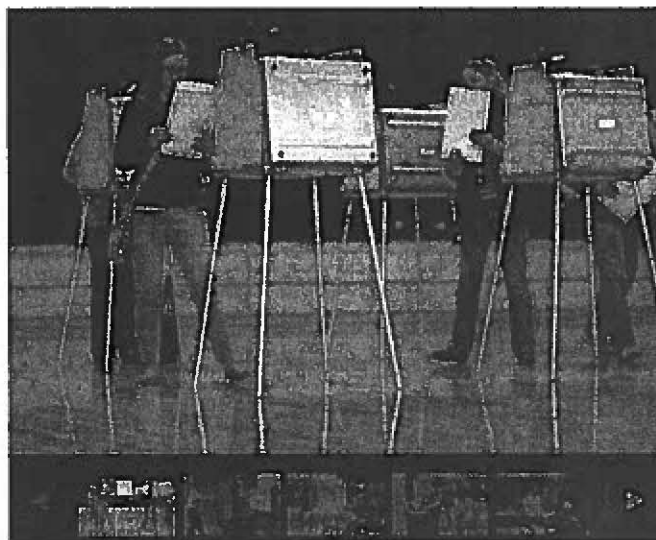
5 Comments

 Like

 Comment

 Share

## Candidate forum for Kalamazoo County races to be held Monday



Portage voters at Precincts 11 and 19 at the Kalamazoo First Assembly of God Church at 5550 Oakland Drive. (Mark Bugnaski / Kalamazoo Gazette)

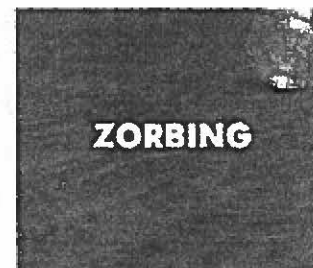
1 / 9 [Fullscreen](#) [Share](#) [Caption](#)

By Emily Monacelli | [emonacelli@mlive.com](mailto:emonacelli@mlive.com)  
Follow on Twitter  
on October 13, 2016 at 4:06 PM

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KALAMAZOO, MI -- Candidates for Kalamazoo County clerk, prosecutor, sheriff and treasurer will participate in a forum Monday, Oct. 17.

The forum will be at Senior Services, 918 Jasper St., Kalamazoo, in the Coover



### MICHIGAN'S BEST



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- 12 reasons to visit bowling centers in West Michigan
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## 117 Kalamazoo County and Mary Balkema sued for housing discrimination



By Malachi Barrett | mbarrett@mlive.com  
on October 13, 2016 at 10:54 AM, updated October 13, 2016 at 12:39 PM

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KALAMAZOO, MI -- A local man is suing Kalamazoo County and treasurer Mary Balkema for housing discrimination.

Willie Caper is a blind African-American man who resided at 603 Ada St. in the city of Kalamazoo. He claims he was discriminated against under the Fair Housing Act and filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court on Oct. 11.

A copy of the lawsuit was sent to the Kalamazoo Gazette by the manager of Sunny Sahu's campaign against Balkema for county treasurer. Balkema declined comment on the the lawsuit, but said it was "politically motivated."

Caper is represented by Portage attorney William Piper.

Caper claims he was mailed notices of owed back taxes, but was unable to read them due to his blindness and his home was foreclosed. When it came time for auction, the defendants bundled his house with 65 other parcels of land and put it



Kalamazoo County Treasurer Mary Balkema

Kalamazoo Gazette file

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**Zachary Lasaller**

October 14, 2016 · 🌐

I will be voting for Mary Balkema... while I don't agree with her on everything she has done a great job as treasurer for our community. On a personal note during times when I haven't been doing great health wise, even when she barely knew me she reached out to me to see how I was.

I'm ashamed of the dirty tactics that the Sahu campaign and his allies are doing. Attempting to make political hay out of an individual that lost their home is a horrible act of desperation of someone that can't campaign on the issues. It also greatly concerns me that Democrat Commissioner Mikcarek was copying and pasting the lawsuit online before it was publicly available which further shows the dirty political tactics and coordination going on here.

Its funny that the same Oak Street Market Community Garden site that Commissioner Mikcarek likes to brag about as his first big victory in Kalamazoo would not of been possible without the assistance of Mary Balkema, but now that its election season that is all forgotten and the knives come out.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share

👍 🗨️ 🌐 15



Write a comment...



## 34 County treasurer candidate's arrest, tax history become campaign issue



0 shares



Due to his tax history and an arrest record, Kalamazoo County Republican Party Chairman Scott McGraw is saying Sahu will not be bondable, a requirement for every employee of the Treasurer's Office. (Courtesy)



By Malachi Barrett | mbarrett1@mlive.com  
on October 20, 2016 at 1:10 PM, updated October 20, 2016 at 8:17 PM

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23

## County treasurer candidate can 'absolutely be bonded,' campaign says



0  
shares



Sunny Sahu poses in a portrait provided to the Kalamazoo Gazette. (Courtesy) (Courtesy photo)



By Malachi Barrett | mbarret1@mlive.com

on October 20, 2016 at 6:29 PM, updated November 01, 2016 at 9:49 AM

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### MICHIGAN'S BEST



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**Zachary Lassiter**

October 20, 2016 · 41

Ouch.... its possible one of the candidates for Kalamazoo County Treasurer can't legally be Country Treasurer. I'd like to see independant people verify Sunny Sahu can't be bonded, but just another reason to vote Mary Balkema.



## County treasurer candidate's arrest, tax history become campaign issue

Due to past federal tax liens and a DUI arrest, Democratic candidate for Kalamazoo...

MLIVE.COM | BY MUVE.COM

Like

Comment

Share

13

3 shares



Mike Boersma Brant Iden has a DUI on his record and spent time in jail in Grand Traverse County. Republicans don't have an issue with his arrest record. Having a discharged tax lien means that the IRS lifted the tax lien and he has paid the IRS what he owed. Get in... See More

Like · Reply · October 20, 2016 at 4:56pm



Zachary Lassiter replied · 2 Replies



Marty Spaulding FVMY, a few years ago, the county board in Rogers City appointed someone to fill an unexpired term due to retirement. She had some skeletons with old credit issues, could not be bonded, and was not allowed to take office.

Like · Reply · October 20, 2016 at 7:52pm · Edited



Write a comment...





**Zachary Lasaller**

October 24, 2016 · 🌐

Former City Commissioners Robert Herry Cinabro, Hannah McKinney, Barbara Hamilton Miller, Eric Cunningham, Sean A. McCann and others... please run for election next year. Matt Milcarek needs to get out of city government.

👍 Like

💬 Comment

➦ Share



Write a comment...



**Zachary Lasaller** shared The City of Kalamazoo, Michigan's photo.

October 24, 2016 · 🌐

Two great things happened in #Kalamazoo tonight.

1. The #FoundationForExcellence MOU passed.
2. Matt Milcarek ensured he is unelectable next year.... [See More](#)



**The City of Kalamazoo, Michigan**

October 24, 2016 · 🌐

👍 Like Page

The motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for the proposed Foundation for Excellence was passed by the City Commission 6-1.



**Zachary Lassiter** added 4 new photos.

October 30, 2016 · 🌐

In my effort to hold candidates for public office accountable I just filed my first Michigan Campaign Finance Act Complaint against a candidate's committee.

Before The  
Michigan Department of State  
Bureau of Elections  
Lansing, MI

In The Matter of: )  
)  
Citizens for Keith Nelson )  
Committee ID # 55036 )  
2312 S Park Street )  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001 )  
Violator )  
)  
Zachary Lassiter (269)389-0176 )  
PO BOX 51644 )  
Kalamazoo, MI 49005 )  
Complainant )

**COMPLAINT FOR  
VIOLATION OF  
SECTION 47 OF THE  
MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE ACT**

**JURISDICTION**

1. KEITH NELSON is a candidate for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees meeting the requirements of a candidate under the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.
2. NELSON formed the Committee "Citizens for Keith Nelson" Committee ID 55036 on August 11th 2016 and is a committee regulated by the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

**ALLEGATIONS**

1. Yard sign purchased by the committee Citizens for Keith Nelson do not contain the required disclaimer required under Section 47 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act.

**STATEMENTS OF FACT**

1. On October 28th 2016 at 2:22 PM I located a yard sign advocating for the election of Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library

1. The sign states "Keith Nelson for KPL" and "for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees" and "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

2. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

3. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

4. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

5. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

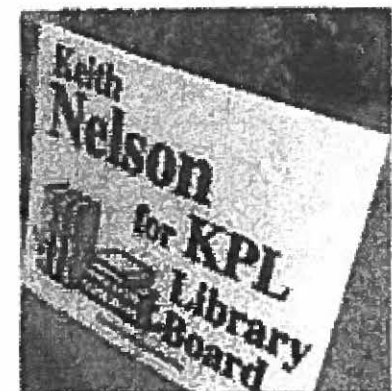
6. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

7. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

8. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

9. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".

10. The sign also states "I am proud to support Keith Nelson for the Kalamazoo Public Library Board of Trustees".



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**Keith  
Nelson**  
for

[-] **banksnld** Milwood Neighborhood 15 points 3 months ago

I let the candidate know about this, and he is going to add an address label to every sign. It's amazing what can be done if you talk to someone first.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[-] **cupcakessuck** 8 points 3 months ago

You know...like an adult.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [parent](#)

[-] **banksnld** Milwood Neighborhood 7 points 3 months ago

Even my kids know this.

[permalink](#) [embed](#) [parent](#)

[+] **zlassiter** [5] *comment score below threshold (6 children)*

[-] **factory81** 7 points 3 months ago

I think you should have reached out to help. This is taking the matter too far.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[-] **sockdog3** 6 points 3 months ago

What a turd. Just reach out, or simply continue to post Mlive articles here like you always do. Just go to Mlive.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[-] **kzoonative** 3 points 2 months ago

I'm going to vote for Keith JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE SUCH A JERK.

Really ? An address missing (minor oversight) and you file a complaint ?

What a d-bag.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[-] **stognabologna420** -2 points 3 months ago

Why? You're so petty that it makes me sick. Get a life. Get a fucking life you dirty little scum bag snitch. Nobody gives a shit about this but you. I hope being a bitch rat fills the void that your father left from not hugging you enough. Seriously, stay under your fucking bridge.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[-] **dwarner5030** 6 points 3 months ago

.....damn dude.

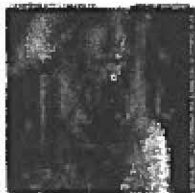


**Zachary Laasitar**

November 1, 2016 · 🌐

More threats from the ex... apparently she can't get it from her fat hubby so she has to offer to "f\*\*\* me".

## VISITOR POSTS



**Perfectly Kate**

October 31 at 5:27pm 🌐

FUCK YOU ASSSHOLE I NO ONE LIKES YOU I  
WATCH YOUR BACK I COME TO KALAMAZOO  
A LOT !!!!

Like · Comment · Message



Like



Comment



Share



2



**Missy Harris** report her

Like · Reply · November 2, 2016 at 10:08pm



Write a comment...





**Zachary Lassiter**

November 6, 2016 · Kalamazoo · 🌐

For the last few months I've been sleeping 20 hours a day. I wish I could say it's refreshing.

 Like

 Comment

 Share



1



Write a comment...



## Record won't stop county treasurer candidate from bonding, agents say



Sunny Sahu poses in a photo provided to the Kalamazoo Gazette. (Courtesy)



By Malechi Barrett | mbarrett@mlive.com  
on November 02, 2016 at 6:00 AM, updated November 02, 2016 at 6:06 AM



KALAMAZOO MI -- Past tax and legal problems would not prevent the Democratic

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**Zachary Lassiter**

November 7, 2015 · 🇺🇸

People of Kalamazoo County: A Campaign Finance Violation has been filed against Kathi Valeli, Citizens for Sunny Sahu and Matt Milcarek.

Before The  
Michigan Department of State  
Bureau of Elections  
Lansing, MI

|                               |   |                            |
|-------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| In The Matter of:             | ) |                            |
|                               | ) |                            |
| Commissioner Matthew Milcarek | ) |                            |
| City of Kalamazoo             | ) |                            |
| 241 West South Street         | ) | VIOLATION OF               |
| Kalamazoo, MI 49001           | ) | SECTION 17, 16, 11 & 21 OF |
| Violator                      | ) | THE MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN      |
|                               | ) | FINANCE ACT                |
| -&-                           | ) |                            |
|                               | ) |                            |
| Friends of Matt Milcarek      | ) |                            |
| Candidate ID 10926            | ) |                            |
| 615 W Main St                 | ) |                            |
| Kalamazoo, MI 49001           | ) |                            |

HPSCAN\_1107214557.pdf

DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM

👍 Like

💬 Comment

🔗 Share



Write a comment...







**Zachary Laasler**

November 7, 2016

Another reason to vote Mary Balkema, her opponent Sunny Sahu committed campaign finance violations.

Before the  
Michigan Department of State  
Bureau of Elections  
Lansing, MI

In The Matter of:

Commissioner Matthew Hilgerson  
City of Kalamazoo  
261 West South Street  
Kalamazoo, MI 49001  
Violator

VIOLATION OF  
SECTION 57, 34, 31 & 21 OF  
THE MICHIGAN CAMPAIGN  
FINANCE ACT

-&-

Friends of Matt Hilgerson  
Committee ID 149316  
615 W Walnut St  
Kalamazoo MI 49001

HPSCAN\_1107214557.pdf

DRIVE.GOOGLE.COM



Like



Comment



Share



2



Write a comment...







KZOO

KZOO

comments



## Campaign Finance Violation Filed Against Milcarek, Sahu and Valeii

[\(drive.google.com\)](#)

submitted 2 months ago by [zlassiter](#) [Stuart Neighborhood](#)

5 comments [share](#)

### all 5 comments

sorted by: **best** ▼

[-] [banksnld](#) [Millwood Neighborhood](#) 5 points 2 months ago

This petty nonsense is why you'll never be a Woodward or Bernstein.

[permalink](#) [embed](#)

[+] [zlassiter](#) [5] comment score below threshold (2 children)

[-] [mothernaturelsfickle](#) [knitknitknit](#) 3 points 2 months ago

This all reads like nonsense to me and maybe I'm just not understanding exactly what the document is trying to say, but is there a dollar amount that you are upset about and is there a reason why you are angry Township board members used official emails to contact each other?

[permalink](#) [embed](#)