



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

June 30, 2016

Karen Palmer
5289 Long Lake Road
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721

Dear Ms. Palmer:

The Department of State (Department) received a formal complaint filed by Charles Veneros 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 on certain campaign signs. 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). A knowing violation constitutes a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000.00, imprisonment for up to 93 days, or both. MCL 169.247(6).

In support of his complaint, Mr. Veneros provided pictures of signs which state, "Elect KAREN PALMER ALOHA TOWNSHIP TREASURER [.]". The paid-for-by statement appears to be omitted from the signs.

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, 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 reply will be provided to Veneros, 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

Karen Palmer
June 30, 2016
Page 2

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, appearing to read "Lori A. Bourbonais".

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Charles Veneros

Campaign Finance Complaint Form
Michigan Department of State

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT 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 <u>CHARLES N. Veneros</u>		Daytime Telephone Number <u>231-625-9772</u>
Mailing Address <u>4089 MANN ROAD</u>		
City <u>Cheboygan</u>	State <u>mi.</u>	Zip <u>49721-9251</u>

Section 2. Alleged Violator

Name <u>KAREN PALMER</u>		
Mailing Address <u>5289 LONG LAKE RD.</u>		
City <u>Cheboygan</u>	State <u>mi.</u>	Zip <u>49721</u>

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

Section(s) of the MCFA violated:

MCL-SECTION 169.247 ("PAID FOR BY") Disclaimer

Explain how those sections were violated:

- ① POLITICAL YARD SIGN DOES NOT INCLUDE PAID BY OR PAID FOR. "ALL DISCLAIMERS MUST BE PRINTED CLEARLY PRINTED SO AS TO BE READABLE BY AN OBSERVER."
- ② SIGN ON STATE TRUNK LINES AND MDOT RIGHT AWAY.
- ③ I DON'T BELIEVE SHE OBTAINED PERMISSION OF PROPERTY OWNERS, SINCE NO SIGNS ARE IN YARDS ALL ON ROADS AND CORNERS.

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

PICTURES INCLUDED

Section 4. Certification (Required)

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

X

Charles N. Veneros
Signature of Complainant

June 20, 2016
Date

Section 5. Certification without Evidence (Supplemental to Section 4)

Section 15(6) of the MCFA (MCL 169.215) requires that the signed certification found in section 4 of this form be included in every complaint. However, if, after a reasonable inquiry under the circumstances, you are unable to certify that certain factual contentions are supported by evidence, you may also make the following certification:

I certify that to the best of my knowledge, information, or belief, there are grounds to conclude that the following specifically identified factual contentions are likely to be supported by evidence after a reasonable opportunity for further inquiry. Those specific contentions are:

X

Charles N. Veneros
Signature of Complainant

June 20, 2016
Date

Section 15(8) of the MCFA provides that a person who files a complaint with a false certification is responsible for a civil violation of the MCFA. The person may be required to pay a civil fine of up to \$1,000.00 and some or all of the expenses incurred by the Michigan Department of State and the alleged violator as a direct result of the filing of the complaint.

Mail or deliver the completed complaint form with an **original signature and evidence** to the following address:

Michigan Department of State
Bureau of Elections
Richard H. Austin Building – 1st Floor
430 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48918

Michigan

Section 169.247 of the Michigan Code of Laws, political yard signage in Michigan, whether for candidate or ballot question, must include a **disclaimer** that states “**Paid for by**”

(candidate/committee name), (candidate/committee address). If the sign is not approved in writing a candidate (i.e. it is funded by an independent entity) the disclaimer should state: “Paid for by [name] and address of person, group or committee paying for the matter). Not authorized by any candidate/committee.” All disclaimers must be clearly printed so as to be readable by an observer. In addition to these content requirements, the Michigan Department of Transportation has established the following campaign yard sign rules:

“Political candidates are responsible for obtaining approval from the adjacent property owner to place the signs.

Signs must be removed within 10 days following an election.

Signs must be more than 30 feet from the edge of the roadway (white line) for highways that do not have curbs. For highways with curbs, the signs must be more than three feet from the back of the curb.

Signs are not permitted within areas used for clear vision at intersections or commercial driveways, so they will not interfere with the sight distance of a driver. No signs may be placed within the limited access rights-of-way.

Any illegally placed signs will be removed. Signs removed by MDOT crews will be kept for seven days at a local MDOT office or maintenance garage, then discarded.”



Elect



**KAREN
PALMER**

**ALOHA TOWNSHIP
TREASURER**

2015/05/13



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

July 14, 2016

Charles N. Veneros
4089 Mann Road
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721-9251

Dear Mr. Veneros:

The Department of State received a response to the complaint you filed against Karen Palmer, 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: Karen Palmer

RECEIVED
MICHIGAN DEPT. OF STATE

2016 JUL 12 AM 9:59

July 8, 2016

Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State
Richard H. Austin Building
First Floor
430 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48918

Dear Ms. Bourbonais:

RE: Written Response to complaint filed by Charles N. Veneros

It was brought to my attention a couple of weeks ago that my campaign signs were not legal. I was told they did not contain the "paid for by" disclaimer. I immediately called, Mary Ellen Tryban, Cheboygan County Clerk to verify this rule. She advised me to add a sticker to my sign that indicated who paid for the sign and the address. She also advised me that I only needed to apply the sticker to one side of the sign.

I immediately printed the labels and applied them to all signs that were in place around the township.

Even though my other written material was not brought into question, I am also submitting my corrected version of my door hangers.

Please feel free to contact me directly at, 231-420-4444, if there is some other corrective matter I need to address as applying for public position is very new to me.

Thank you,


Karen Palmer

5289 Long Lake Road
Cheboygan, MI 49721
231-420-4444

Elect



KAREN PALMER

**ALPHA TOWNSHIP
TREASURER**

Paid for by Karen Palmer
5289 Long Lake Road
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721

Elect
Karen Palmer
Aloha Township Treasurer



14 Year Resident of Aloha Township
Married with 5 children and 20
Grandchildren

- Own and Operate local natural health business - "Pathway to Health"
- Work Experience: Office Manager - handled all finances, Technology Director, Bank Secretary
- Written and received numerous grants
- Currently working with Aloha Historical Society to restore the Aloha Train Depot

Dedicated to serving the needs of Aloha Township residents!

Registering To Vote

Need to register to vote by June 30, 2016
to vote in the August 2, 2016 election.

Voting Timeline

August 2nd - State Primary Election

November 8th - General Election

Paid for by Karen Palmer
5289 Long Lake Road
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721



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

September 19, 2016

Karen Palmer
5289 Long Lake Rd
Cheboygan, Michigan 49721

Dear Ms. Palmer:

The Department of State (Department) has completed its investigation of the complaint filed against you by Charles Veneros, which alleged that you violated section 47(1) of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA or Act), 1976 PA 388, MCL 169.247(1), by failing to include a complete and correct identification statement on certain campaign-related material. This letter concerns the disposition of Mr. Veneros' complaint.

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), R 169.36(2). A knowing violation constitutes a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000.00, imprisonment for up to 93 days, or both. MCL 169.247(6).

The Act also requires the Department to "endeavor to correct the violation or prevent a further violation by using informal methods [.] if it finds that "there may be reason to believe that a violation ... has occurred [.] MCL 169.215(10). The objective of an informal resolution is "to correct the violation or prevent a further violation [.] Id.

Mr. Veneros filed his complaint on June 23, 2016, and you filed a written response on July 12, 2016. Mr. Veneros did not file a rebuttal statement with the Department.

Mr. Veneros alleged that you failed to include a paid-for-by statement on certain campaign material. In support of his complaint, Mr. Veneros provided pictures of signs which stated, "Elect KAREN PALMER ALOHA TOWNSHIP TREASURER [.] There did not appear to be a paid-for-by statement on the signs.

In your response you admitted that your signs were not in compliance with the Act at the time the complaint was filed, but once the omission was brought to your attention you printed stickers with a complete and correct paid-for-by statement and affixed the stickers to each of your signs. You provided a copy of pictures of signs which included the stickers and a campaign door hanger with a sticker affixed.

While the Department believes that the evidence tends to show that your campaign material failed to contain a paid-for-by statement, section 15(10) of the MCFA requires the Department to "endeavor to correct the violation or prevent a further violation by using informal methods such

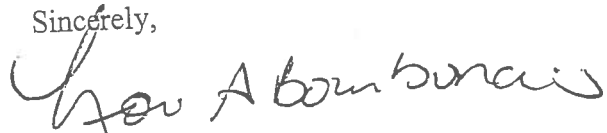
as a conference, conciliation, or persuasion [.]” The Department is satisfied that you took appropriate corrective measures to bring your campaign material into compliance with the MCFA.

Additionally, the Department is advising you that section 47(1) and R 169.36(2) require you to print a complete and accurate identification statement on all campaign materials, consisting of the phrase “paid for by” followed by the full name and address of your committee. Note that all printed materials that refer to an election or your candidacy produced in the future must include this identification statement.

Please be advised that this notice has served to remind you of your obligation under the Act to identify your printed matter, and may be used in future proceedings as evidence that tends to establish a knowing violation of the Act. A knowing violation is a misdemeanor offense and may merit referral to the Attorney General for enforcement action. MCL 169.247(6), 215(10).

The Department now considers this matter closed and will take no further action against you at this time.

Sincerely,



Lori A. Bourbonais
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

c: Charles Veneros