



Michigan Department of State
Campaign Finance Complaint Form

BUREAU OF ELECTIONS • RICHARD H. AUSTIN BUILDING - 1st Floor
430 W. ALLEGAN STREET • LANSING, MICHIGAN 48918

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MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE

2021 NOV -4 PM 1:09

ELECTIONS/GREAT SEAL

This complaint form may be used to file a complaint alleging that someone violated the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA). For instructions on how to complete this form, see the Campaign Finance Complaint Guidebook & Procedures document. All spaces are required unless otherwise indicated.

Section 1. Complainant		
Your Name Jeff Winston		Daytime Telephone Number 616-780-5174
Mailing Address 1525 Forrest Ave NE		
City Grand Rapids	State MI	Zip 49505
Email (optional) jeff.winston@att.net		

Section 2. Alleged Violator		
Name FOREST HILLS FOR JUST EDUCATION - Committee ID: 2021032		
Mailing Address 2205 KNOLLPOINT DR NE		
City ADA	State MI	Zip 49301
Email (optional) info@fhforjusteducation.org		

Section 3. Allegations (Use additional sheets if more space is needed.)

Section(s) of the MCFA alleged to be violated: Section 169.247 (1)

Explain how those sections were violated:

Yard signs expressly advocating recall, branded with "Forest Hills for Just Education" do not disclose the

the name and address of the person or committee paying for the sign as required by law.

Evidence included with the submission of the complaint that supports the allegations:

See attached supporting photograph of yard signs in question.

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

Signature of Complainant

10/20/2021

Date

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

If, after a reasonable inquiry under the circumstances, you are unable to certify that certain factual contentions are supported by evidence as indicated above, you may 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

Signature of Complainant

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.

Section 6. Submission

Once completed, mail or hand deliver the complaint form with your evidence to the address below. The complaint is considered filed upon receipt by the Bureau of Elections.

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

RECALL FHPS SCHOOL BOARD NOW!



SCAN ME



FOREST HILLS
FOR JUST
EDUCATION

FOR MORE INFO VISIT www.fhforjusteducation.org



STATE OF MICHIGAN
JOCELYN BENSON, SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
LANSING

April 7, 2022

Forest Hills for Just Education
2205 Knollpoint Dr. NE
Ada, MI 49301

Re: *Winston v. Forest Hills for Just Education*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2021-11-55-247

Dear Forest Hills for Just Education:

The Department of State (Department) has received a formal complaint alleging you have violated MCL 169.247 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act (MCFA) by failing to include an identification statement on yard signs advocating for the recall of the Forest Hills Public School District's School Board. A photo of those yard signs was included with the complaint; a copy of the complaint is enclosed.

The MCFA and corresponding administrative rules require a person who produces printed material that relates to an election 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).

Upon review, the evidence submitted supports the conclusion that a potential violation of the Act has occurred. From the outset, the Department must consider whether it is an expenditure covered by the MCFA. The yard sign explicitly advocated for the recall of the Forest Hills Public School District's School Board. This is express advocacy as defined by the Act. MCL 169.206(2)(j). Because the yard sign explicitly advocates for the recall of sitting officeholders, the website and the printed materials are covered by the ambit of the Act and must include the paid for by statement outlined under section 47. *Id.* However, the yard sign completely omitted the required paid for by statement. Since this phrase is absent, the evidence supports the conclusion that a potential violation has occurred.

After reaching this conclusion, the Act 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.*

Given this, the Department concludes that a formal warning is a sufficient resolution to the complaint and is hereby advising you that MCL 169.247(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 referencing you or your candidacy produced in the future must include this identification statement. For all materials currently in circulation, the paid for by statement must be corrected. If this information has been included in your materials and you wish to rebut the Department's conclusion, you must respond in writing to the Department within 15 business days of the date of this letter otherwise the Department will treat the complaint as resolved.

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).

Sincerely,



Adam Fracassi, Regulatory Manager
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State