



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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SECTION 2/2 GREAT SE

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 Katherine Brink		Daytime Telephone Number 6162182055	
Mailing Address 6234 woodcliff st			
City Holland	State MI	Zip 49423	
Email (optional)			

Section 2. Alleged Violator			
Name Bree Austin-Roberts			
Mailing Address 963 Sagewood Ct			
City Holland	State MI	Zip 49423	
Email (optional)			

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

Section(s) of the MCFA alleged to be violated: Section 169.247 (Section 47)

Explain how those sections were violated:

Mrs Austin-Roberts, candidate for Holland Public School Board, has displayed many yard signs across the city with unlawful disclaimers.

The address of the person paying for the matter,
the required address of the Committee is omitted

(I had contacted Holland City Clerk and Katie Sims the election coordinator of Ottawa County)

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

pictures enclosed.

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

11/09/22

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

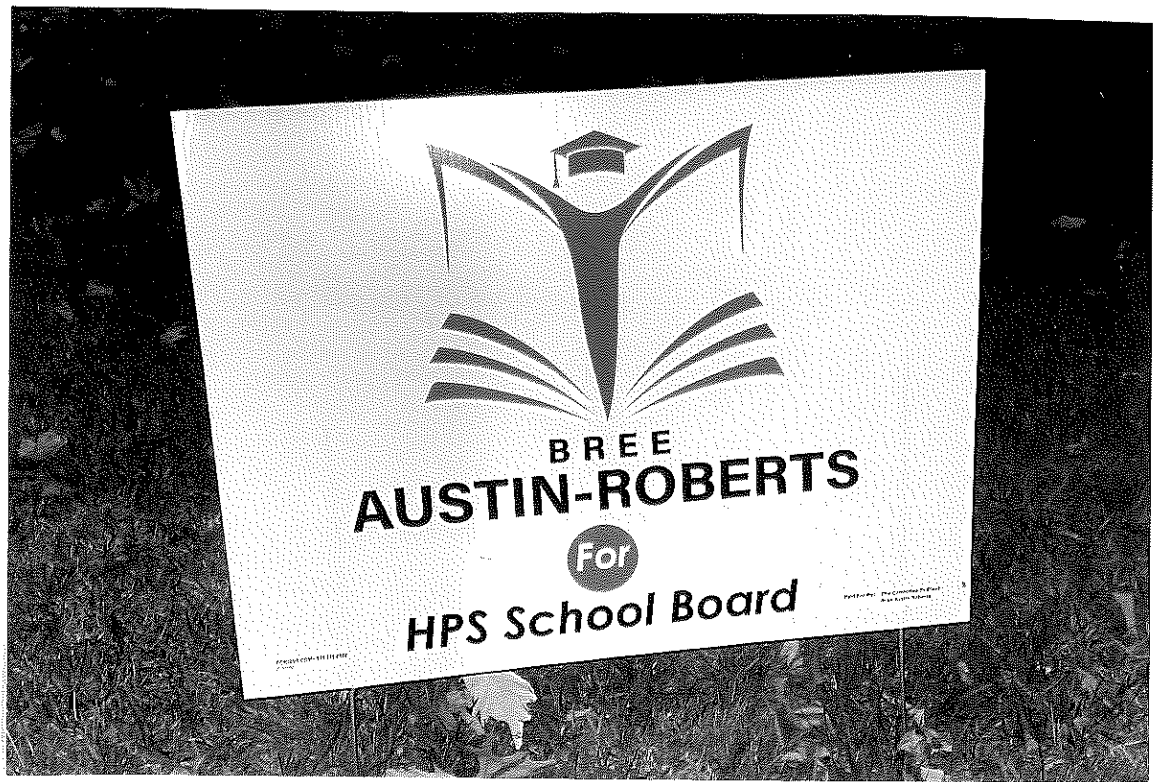
Date

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





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

November 22, 2022

Bree Austin-Roberts
963 Sagewood Ct.
Holland, MI 49423

Re: *Brink v. Austin-Roberts*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 - 11 - 213 – 47

Dear Ms. Austin-Roberts:

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 a campaign yard sign. A picture 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 the materials fall within the ambit of the MCFA. Because the materials explicitly advocate for the election or defeat of a candidate, or for the passage or defeat of a ballot proposal, the materials contain express advocacy as defined by the Act. MCL 169.206(2)(j). As explained above, such materials must contain a "paid for by" statement listing the name and address of the committee purchasing the materials. However, the evidence shows that the materials at issue here omit part or all of that required statement. That absence supports the conclusion that a potential violation of the MCFA 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 at the address below or BOERegulatory@michigan.gov 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,

Regulatory Section
Bureau of Elections
Michigan Department of State

Enclosure
c: Katherine Brink

MDOS-BOERegulatory

From: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Sent: Thursday, December 8, 2022 1:19 PM
To: Bree Austin-Roberts
Subject: RE: Campaign finance complaint number 2022- 11- 2 13-47

Dear Ms. Austin-Roberts:

The Department is receipt of your email regarding the Section 47 warning you received due to the omission of your committee address on your yard signs. Thank you for the description of your efforts to correct the omission and to ensure that it is not continued in further signage. The Department is satisfied that these acts constitute reasonable efforts and consider the matter closed.

Regulatory Section
[Bureau of Elections](#)
Michigan Department of State
Main: 517-335-3234
BOERegulatory@michigan.gov

From: Bree Austin-Roberts <bree4hpstrustee@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 8, 2022 12:57 PM
To: MDOS-BOERegulatory <MDOS-BOERegulatory@michigan.gov>
Subject: Campaign finance complaint number 2022- 11- 2 13-47

CAUTION: This is an External email. Please send suspicious emails to abuse@michigan.gov

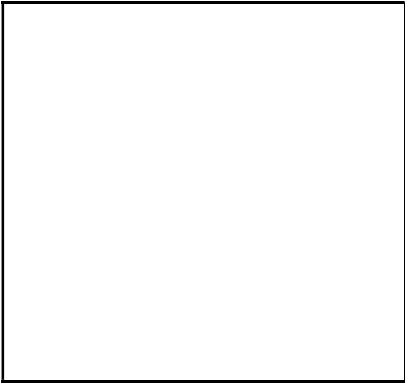
Hello, I am writing to address Brink versus Austin-Roberts campaign finance complaint.

The committee to elect, Bree Austin-Roberts respectfully removed the signs that were visible throughout the city due to the inadvertent error of not displaying the committees address on the yard signs. This issue has been resolved directly as well as addressed by committee members with our county clerks office. Signs that were visible and placed in the Ottawa county democratic party's office were also labeled with the committees address once we were notified of this violation. Additionally, we were not notified until the week of the election when signs were already going to be coming down soon. However, we still addressed the issue. Please contact me directly if there's more attention needed to this matter. Thank you.

Bree Austin-Roberts
616-566-9230

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"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest". ~Benjamin Franklin



Bree Austin-Roberts

Candidate for HPS School Board Trustee

P.O Box 1046

Holland, MI 49422

Email: bree4HPStrustee@gmail.com

www.Bree4HPStrustee.com

Ph: 616-566-9230

