



Michigan Department of State
Campaign Finance Complaint Form

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

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
2022 OCT -4 PM 2:27
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 Stephen Hawring		Daytime Telephone Number 248-613-0002
Mailing Address 1001 Woodward Ave, Ste. 500		
City Detroit	State MI	Zip 48226
Email (optional) Creative@hexagoncreativetdetroit.com		

Section 2. Alleged Violator		
Name Stop Taxing Our Property		
Mailing Address 43155 Main Street, Suite #2210E		
City Novi	State MI	Zip 48375
Email (optional) info@stoptaxingourproperty.com		

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

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

Explain how those sections were violated:

(1) Stop Taxing Our Property is registered as a ballot question committee. The website for the committee does not have any paid for statement. The committee's treasurer is David Staudt, who is aware of the disclaimer requirements. Staudt previously filed his own complaint on this basis. See Staudt v Turner, 2018-05-014-47.

The website encourages the defeat of a proposal, and disclaimer is required.

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

Print outs of three webpages on www.stoptaxingourproperty.com showing that no disclaimer is present.

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

9/27/22

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:

I certify that all evidence is factual and reasonable

X


Signature of Complainant

9/27/22

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

STOP TAXING OUR PROPERTY

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\$T.O.P.

OAKLAND COUNTY TRANSIT TAX!

[Click Here To Get Literature Now](#)

The Transit Tax Proposal is WRONG for Oakland County!

[Get Involved](#)

The Oakland County board of commissioners pushed through a massive tax hike

with no consideration from local leaders.

They hope to con Oakland County voters into accepting this transit tax based on false promises and deceiving information. STOP TAXING OUR PROPERTY has been formed to inform the public and give them the facts on why they should reject this proposal and opt for efficient transit solutions.



Former Secretary of State and current State Senator Ruth Johnson on the Oakland County Transit Tax:

"I've never seen such disregard for communities and the people in them - the stores, the factories, the businesses, they'll all be taxed... You're penalizing us. You're hurting us... I just think it's shameful what's happened

here...and I have never seen anything like this
in the 32 years I have served in office."

Get the Facts

Out-of-control government officials claim there is a need for transit, but the facts show otherwise. Mass transit systems are failing throughout the country as technology makes them obsolete. Federal studies show that mass transit is no longer viable and the wrong decision for Oakland County.

[Learn More](#)

Grassroots Tool Kit

There will be a massive organized effort to push the transit tax from the officials who stand to personally gain from its enactment. We must rise up to prevent this from happening. We give you the resources on how you can push back against this massive tax.

[Volunteer Now](#)

Support Us

With absentee voting starting in September, it is crucial that we reach as many voters with our message as quickly as possible. Your generous donation will enable us to do so.

[Help](#)

Contact Us

Feel free to contact us with any questions or fill out this form and we will keep you in the loop and get back to you about any questionr or comments.

Email

info@stoptaxingourproperty.com

Phone

248-563-8250

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Email *

Message *



Submit

Stop Taxing Our Property

43155 Main Street, Suite #2210E

Novi, MI 48375

248-563-8250

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STOP TAXING OUR PROPERTY

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Connect with us.

We need you to get involved, engaged and active in order to defeat the transit tax at the ballot box this November. Please connect with us and let us know what you need, and we will make sure we get it to you!

Name *

First Name

Last Name

Email *

What do you need?

- ☐ Walk Lists
- ☐ Literature
- ☐ Phone Call Lists for Outreach
- ☐ Become a Social Media Ambassador

Any questions or comments?

Send

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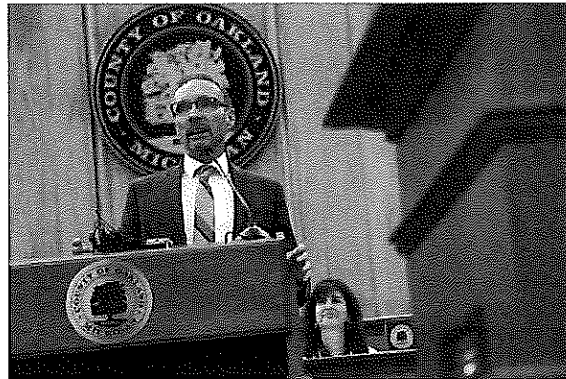
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STOP TAXING OUR PROPERTY



Where did the Oakland County Transit Tax Plan Come From?

Ask County Executive David Coulter.

“Our peer regions, like Denver, Indianapolis, and Columbus, have all made major investments in transit and mobility over the last decade.”

— Oakland County Executive David Coulter, State of the County 2020

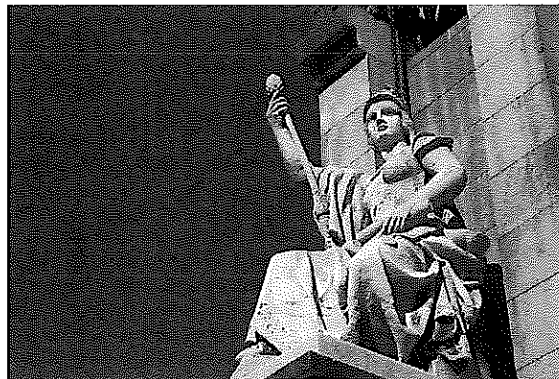
[Read the 2020 State of the County here](#)

How are Denver, Columbus and Indianapolis measuring up?

Denver

- Denver rates dropped 70 percent during the COVID pandemic and have not recovered. [1]
- Forced to give away bus fares for free to keep people using the buses. [2]
- Buses have become a center for violent criminal activity as a result. [3]

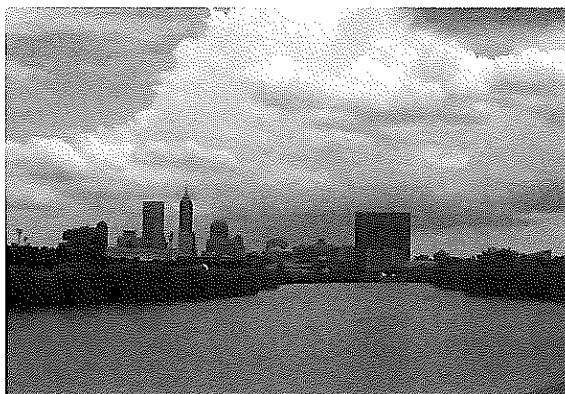
"Bus operators are afraid. I mean, at the end of the day, we drive the bus to serve our community. We like to drive the bus. But now we're forced to be being psychiatrists, security guards." – Ron Short, vice president of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001 in Denver.



Columbus

- Experienced a \$32 million budget shortfall even with federal bailout funding. [4]
- Forced to deplete city savings' account and run at a massive budget deficit in order to stay afloat. [5]
- Bus drivers have protested over increasing violence on transit system [6], resulting in a driver shortage affecting routes [7]

"Nobody likes a deficit budget, but it is necessary." – Columbus transit chairman Craig Treneff.



Indianapolis

- False projections forced taxpayers with higher utility bills after companies were saddled with millions in unexpected relocation fees. [8]
- Buses have torn up road ways, costing millions in repairs, and leading to construction nightmares for motorists. [9]
- Reliant on continued federal bailout funds to avoid bankruptcy and insolvency. [10]

**COMPREHENSIVE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS PROVES
MASS TRANSIT IS NO LONGER VIABLE**

READ THE WHOLE STUDY [HERE](#)

"Transit ridership had been declining for several years [before the COVID-19 pandemic] in spite of strong economic growth."

"Many existing perceptions as to attributes of various investment and service options are dramatically out of date and reflect historical conditions that no longer prevail."

"The competitive advantages of mass transit's space, energy, and emissions efficiencies were already being downgraded, as personal vehicles have become more efficient and evolve toward electric propulsion. Already a huge share of personal vehicle travel is more energy and emissions efficient than the vast majority of transit services."

"There is a proclivity toward inflexible rail transportation and large buses that cannot adapt to changing market conditions and that are largely empty outside of rush hour. These modes depend on high occupancy rates to produce real benefits. The growing evidence that the public transit ridership levels will not return to pre-COVID levels even after the health risk has passed will make them generally even more uncompetitive and unproductive."

— COVID-19's Effects on The Future of Transportation (2021-01-14) United States Department of Transportation

Other studies prove the non-viability of Mass Transit as well.

- Public Transit Agencies Face \$23.8 Billion Shortfall: A study from the American Public Transportation Association showed there is a \$23.8 billion shortfall from nationwide mass transit through the end of 2021.
- "Even with the infusion of \$25 billion provided by the Congress..through the CARES Act, transit agencies...still face a shortfall of \$23.8 billion." – APTA, Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Public Transit Funding Needs, May 5, 2020
- "The [Uber and Lyft] effect is a 1.3% decrease in heavy rail ridership and a 1.7% decrease in bus ridership per year. In a market like San Francisco, where Uber started operations in 2010, the model implies that we would expect a 12.7% decrease in bus ridership, all else being equal." – University of Kentucky,

"Understanding the Recent Transit Ridership Decline in Major US Cities: Service Cuts or Emerging Modes?", Aug. 1, 2018

- "Since 1970, [public transit] has received well over \$1 trillion (adjusted for inflation) in subsidies, yet the number of transit trips taken by the average urban resident has declined from about 50 per year in 1970 to 39 per year today." - Randal O'Toole, "The Coming Transit Apocalypse" Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 824, October 24, 2017.

A BROADER TRANSPORTATION AGENDA ON THE HORIZON

- **Road Commission Takeover:** The Oakland County Board of Commissioners recently took over the Road Commission, a formerly nonpartisan independent identity that has won countless awards throughout the years for engineering safe and sturdy roads. The roads will now be politicized and based on political patronage rather than sound environmental practices.
- **Sustainability / Green New Deal:** The Oakland County Board of Commissioners are pushing radical infrastructure and environmental policies under the guise of sustainability. This means higher taxes, higher energy prices, less choices and fewer freedoms for Oakland County residents.
- **Headlee Amendment override:** The Headlee amendment was added to the Michigan state constitution by voters in 1978 to protect the voters from property taxes being inflicted upon them against their will. The Board and its supporters will be pushing Headlee Amendment overrides to increase property taxes further if the Transit Tax is passed.
- **Regional Transit Authority:** The transit tax will lay the foundation for a regional transit authority that syphons money and resources out of Oakland County into neighboring counties in the name of "equity."

REAL SOLUTIONS

"Stop Taxing Our Property" calls for a 21st Century transit solution that reduces inefficiency, cuts waste, relies on local control and input, helps the poor and needy, and gives government funds directly to the people.

Some cities throughout the country are contracting transit services Ride-Sharing Services like Uber and Lyft, or developing their own similar apps designed to facilitate transit. In congested cities with higher populations, this has proven to be an effective way to handle transit.

Other more rural, less populated cities need to spend less of their resources on transit, and have already come up with solutions that work for their people. For example, in Springfield Township, they have a park-and-ride system available to residents, and work with nearby Independence Township to transfer their

unnneeded SMART credits and support rides for seniors and the poor through community development block grant funding.

In Commerce, they provide ride services for seniors and poor citizens less than 10 percent of the cost that would be imposed through the transit tax. There is a diverse group of cities and townships across Oakland County, each with different needs, and the many, rather than the few, must be served on transit for a fair and equitable program to work in Oakland County.

What You're Paying Now...

- \$100 per \$100,000 of taxable value on your home & business throughout Oakland County.
- 5.5¢ of every gallon of gasoline & ten percent of annual registration and plate fees for your car are spent on mass transit.
- Your existing mass transit taxes could lease a new Chevrolet Trax SUV every two years for every regular transit user in metro-Detroit – with an additional \$150 million to spare!

What You Will Pay If The Transit Tax is Approved...

- \$66 million in additional taxes, bare minimum, during the first year ALONE. Provided that the transit projects do not go over budget, which is a frequent occurrence.
- The transit tax is .95 mils, which equates to \$0.95 cents in additional property taxes per \$1,000 in taxable value on a property. This would equate to thousands of dollars in new taxes, spanning a decade, for Oakland County homeowners.

- More taxes down the road. Oakland County Commissioners will use this as a stepping stone for a regional transit authority that will send Oakland County tax dollars out of the county on a nonviable plan that will hemorrhage money.

Stop Taxing Our Property

43155 Main Street, Suite #2210E

Novi, MI 48375

248-563-8250

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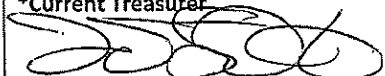
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MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF ELECTIONS

ORIGINAL OR AMENDED

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATION FORM FOR LOCAL BALLOT QUESTION COMMITTEES FILED WITH COUNTY CLERK
Information on this form is made public.

1. Committee ID #: 98150	*2. Type of Filing: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original: <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment to items: Eff. Date:	
*3. Date Committee was Formed: 8/22/2022		
*4. Full Name of Committee: Stop Taxing Our Property		
5. Acronym or Abbreviation (if any): STOP		
*6. Complete Committee Mailing Address (May be PO Box): PO Box 7036, Novi, MI 48376		
*7. Complete Committee Street Address (May not be PO Box): 43155 Main Street, Ste 2210E, Novi, MI 48376		
*Committee Phone: 2485638250	*Committee Email Address: info@stoptaxingourproperty.com	
Committee Fax #: N/A	Committee Website Address: stoptaxingourproperty.com	
*8. Treasurer Name and Complete Residential Address: David Staudt, 43155 Main Street, Ste 2210E, Novi, MI 48375		
Phone #: 2485615055 Email Address: info@stoptaxingourproperty.com		
9. Designated Record Keeper Name and Complete Address:		
Phone #: Email Address:		
*10. REPORTING WAIVER REQUEST: <input type="checkbox"/> YES, I/WE WANT TO APPLY FOR THE REPORTING WAIVER. The committee does not expect to spend or receive in excess of \$1,000.00 in an election. I/We understand that if the committee does not spend or receive in excess of \$1,000.00 in an election, the committee does not owe detailed campaign statements. I/We further understand that the Reporting Waiver will be automatically lost if the committee exceeds the \$1,000.00 threshold and all required campaign statements must be filed. A Reporting Waiver does not exempt a committee from filing Late Contribution Reports. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO, I/WE DO NOT WANT TO APPLY FOR THE REPORTING WAIVER. The committee expects to spend or receive in excess of \$1,000.00 in an election. I/We understand that the committee owes detailed campaign statements even if the committee does not spend or receive in excess of \$1,000.00 in an election. I/We further understand that the Reporting Waiver cannot be requested retroactively to avoid filing requirements and to avoid paying late filing fees. Further information regarding Reporting Waivers can be found in Appendix C of the Committee Manual.		
*11. Name and Address of Depositories or Intended Depositories of committee funds. (Michigan Bank, Credit Union or Savings & Loan Association) *Official Depository (name and address): PNC Bank, 41325 W 10 Mile, Novi, MI 48375 Secondary Depository (name and address):		
12. List the specific ballot proposal(s) involved using the official ballot designation if available and mark support or oppose as appropriate: <input type="checkbox"/> Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oppose Description: Countywide Transit Millage of .95 M.I.S. Indicate the ballot proposal district below by selecting County (include the county name), Multi-County or Local (include the name of the jurisdiction). If multi-county, list the county where the greatest number of voters eligible to vote on the proposal reside. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-County <input type="checkbox"/> Local		
13. Verification: I/We certify that all reasonable diligence was used in the preparation of the above statement and that the contents are true, accurate and complete to the best of my/our knowledge or belief. I/We certify that all reasonable diligence will be used in the preparation of each statement electronically filed by this committee and that the contents of each statement will be true, accurate and complete to the best of my/our knowledge or belief.		
*Current Treasurer 		*Designated Record Keeper (If Applicable) Date: 08/22/2022 Date:



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

October 12, 2022

Stop Taxing Our Property
43155 Main St. Ste. 2210E
Novi, MI 48375

Re: *Hawring v. Stop Taxing Our Property*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 - 10 - 133 - 47

Dear Stop Taxing Our Property:

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 the ballot question committee's website. Pictures of the website are 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 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: Stephen Hawring

From: David W Staudt <compliance@impactmediapro.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 29, 2022 7:44 AM
To: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Subject: Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 - 10 - 113 - 47

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

Hello,

My name is Dave Staudt and I am Treasurer of Stop Taxing Our Property (Oakland County Committee ID No. 98150)

I am in receipt of the above referenced Campaign Finance Complaint dated October 24, 2022.

I have reviewed the information in the complaint and immediately had our web developer make corrections to remedy the unintended violation on all pages of our BQC website. A copy of one of the revised pages which includes the "Paid for with Regulated Funds" statement is attached. I have also included a link to the website below.

<https://www.stoptaxingourproperty.com/>

This was an unintentional oversight by the website developer and Ballot Question Committee Staff. I have ask we review all our current materials for compliance and will use greater care in the future to make sure that they are in full compliance with the MCLA.

Best regards,

Dave Staudt
Treasurer
Stop Taxing Our Property (Oakland County Ballot Question Committee)

Dave Staudt
Accounting and Compliance Consultant
Impact Media Professionals, LLC.
43155 Main Street, Ste. 2210E
Novi, MI 48376
Cell: 248.561.5055
Fax: 248.341.0555

impactmedia®