

Michigan Campaign Finance Complaint

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
2022 OCT 26 PM 3:30
F. J. TIONS/GREAT SEAL

Section 1. Complainant

Name: Matthew Ross Schonert

Daytime Telephone Number: +1 (231) 250-9931

Mailing Address: 22050 Boulder Ave, Eastpointe, MI 48021

Email: mrschonert@gmail.com

Section 2. Alleged Violator

Name: Armani Asad

Mailing Address: 11451 Conant Ave, Hamtramck, Michigan 48212

Email: armaniasad@gmail.com

Section 3. Allegations

Sections of MCFA alleged to be violated:

MCL 169.247(1)

Explain how those sections were violated:

1. Armani Asad was a 2022 candidate for Wayne County Commission.
2. Yard signs displayed in Detroit and Hamtramck expressly advocated Asad's election as county commissioner ("Elect Armani Asad").
3. MCL 169.247(1) requires that printed materials such as these include an identifier specifying who paid for the material, along with both their name and address.
4. The omission of an identifier on these signs constitutes a violation of MCL 169.247(1).

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

Photo of yard sign on Carpenter Avenue in Detroit on July 31, 2022.

Michigan Campaign Finance Complaint

RECEIVED/FILED
MICHIGAN DEPT OF STATE
2022 OCT 24 PM 3:37
FIDELITY/GRANT SEAL

Section 1. Complainant

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Mailing Address: 22050 Boulder Ave, Eastpointe, MI 48021

Email: mrschonert@gmail.com

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Mailing Address: 11451 Conant Ave, Hamtramck, Michigan 48212

Email: armaniasad@gmail.com

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Explain how those sections were violated:

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3. MCL 169.247(1) requires that printed materials such as these include an identifier specifying who paid for the material, along with both their name and address.
4. The omission of an identifier on these signs constitutes a violation of MCL 169.247(1).

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

Photo of yard sign on Carpenter Avenue in Detroit on July 31, 2022.

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:

N/A

X

Signature of Complainant

Date

Section 6. Submission

This complaint is hereby submitted to:

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 1, 2022

Armani Asad
11451 Conant Ave.
Hamtramck, MI 48212

Re: *Schonert v. Asad*
Campaign Finance Complaint No. 2022 - 10 - 169 - 47

Dear Mr. Asad:

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: Matthew Schonert

MDOS-BOERegulatory

From: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Sent: Monday, November 21, 2022 12:26 PM
To: Armani Asad
Subject: RE: Armani asad vs Matthew schonert complaint number 2022– 10–169–47

Dear Mr. Asad,

The Department is receipt of your email regarding the Section 47 warning you received due to the omission of your committee name or address on your yard signs. Because it appears that an address was not included on the disclosure, as required by MCL 169.247 (“an identification that contains the name and address of the person paying for the matter”), it appears that there was still a violation of the MCFA. However, the Department appreciates the description of your efforts to correct the omission and to ensure that it is not continued in further signage. In the future, please be sure that all signs include the name and address of the person paying for the matter. The Department is satisfied that your 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: Armani Asad <armaniasad@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 20, 2022 5:13 PM
To: MDOS-BOERegulatory <MDOS-BOERegulatory@michigan.gov>; MDOS-BOERegulatory <MDOS-BOERegulatory@michigan.gov>
Subject: Armani asad vs Matthew schonert complaint number 2022– 10–169–47

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

To Whom It May Concern,

Hello, my name is Armani Asad and I received a letter from the Disclosure Division Department stating that on my election signs I did not put “Paid for by Armani Asad’s campaign.” When the signs were delivered, I noticed that there was a misprint. For that, I put stickers on each sign so I could avoid the problem. The picture that was taken had a sticker on it but it seems to be removed. I know that I put the sticker on it because it was in front of my house and it was the first sign I put out. Also, the sign itself went missing from my lawn. To add on, I didn’t use all of the signs. I still have the boxes of them. The ones I did put out however, had stickers on them. These signs were the newly ordered signs. My previous signs and banners. all had the “Paid for by Armani Asad’s Campaign.” I ran for city council during the 2021 election. I’m aware that this is needed and I put the sticker on because of the misprint. The initial design also had the “Paid for by Armani Asad’s Campaign.” Please consider my explanation before taking any action. If there’s any more questions, please feel free to contact me at [313-586-2736](tel:313-586-2736) or email me at armaniasad20@gmail.com. Thank you and have a wonderful day!

Best regards,
Armani Asad





VO

