



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF ELECTIONS

ITEMIZED EXPENDITURES
SCHEDULE 1B
CANDIDATE COMMITTEE

1. Committee I. D. Number 139544

2. Committee Name Friends of Maggie Owens

3. Name and address of person or vendor to whom paid	4. Purpose (Required Information)	5. Date	6. Amount
Expenditure #1 Name <u>Walmart Super Center</u> Address <u>14900 Dix Toledo Rd</u> <u>Southgate, MI 48195</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser	Purpose: <u>business attire</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement	<u>3/10</u> Date	<u>\$ 33.80</u>
Expenditure #2 Name <u>Smooth To You</u> Address <u>14600 Lakeside Cir</u> <u>Sterling Heights, MI 48313</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser	Purpose: <u>business luncheon</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement	<u>3/15</u> Date	<u>\$ 9.05</u>
Expenditure #3 Name <u>Deanna Williams</u> Address <u>23025 Hayes</u> <u>Eastpointe, MI 48021</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser	Purpose: <u>community event</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement	<u>3/21</u> Date	<u>\$ 50.00</u>
Expenditure #4 Name <u>Claver-leaf Restaurant</u> Address <u>84443 Gratiot Ave</u> <u>Eastpointe, MI 48021</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser	Purpose: <u>business meeting</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement	<u>3/24</u> Date	<u>\$ 28.33</u>
Expenditure #5 Name <u>Value World</u> Address <u>24900 Kelly Rd</u> <u>Eastpointe, MI 48021</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser	Purpose: <u>business attire</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Check box if this expenditure is payment of debt or obligation reported on previous statement	<u>4/1</u> Date	<u>\$ 33.98</u>

Subtotal this page

123.94

Grand Total of all Schedules 1B
(Complete on last page of Schedule)

5,249.91

Enter this total
on line 8a of
Summary Page

MDOS-BOERegulatory

From: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Sent: Friday, December 2, 2022 12:31 PM
To: Matt Schonert
Subject: Campaign finance complaint Schonert v. Owens
Attachments: 2022.11.18 Rebuttal letter Schonert v. Owens.pdf; 2022.11.14 Response Schonert v. Owens.pdf; 2022.12.01 Response Schonert v. Owens.pdf; 2022.12.01 Response2 Schonert v. Owens.pdf

Dear Mr. Schonert:

The Department has received the attached supplemental response from Ms. Owens in response to the four complaints you have filed against her. Her initial response and the Department's letter advising you of that response are also attached. Accordingly, the Department is extending the time period for you to submit a rebuttal, if you choose to do so, for an additional 10 business days from today, making the due date December 16, 2022.

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

From: MDOS-BOERegulatory
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2022 5:02 PM
To: Matt Schonert <mrschonert@gmail.com>
Subject: Campaign finance complaint Schonert v. Owens

Please see the attached.

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

December 12, 2022

22050 Boulder Avenue
Eastpointe, Michigan 48021

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

Re: Schonert v. Owens
Campaign Finance Complaints 2022-10-137-226 and 2022-11-185-244

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in response to the Bureau of Elections's letter dated November 18, 2022, regarding the answer of Monique Owens ("respondent") to complaint 2022-10-137-226, as well as its December 2, 2022, email regarding Owens's answer to complaint 2022-11-185-244. I hereby respectfully submit my rebuttal in these matters.¹

Complaint 2022-10-137-226 Rebuttal

Background to complaint 2022-10-137-226

Complaint 2022-10-137-126 alleged that the respondent, as organizer of the committee SUPPORTERSFORMONIQUEOWENSFORSENATE, violated various sections of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act. In summary, it was alleged that the respondent violated various subsections of Section 26 of the Michigan Campaign Finance Act ("MCFA") by failing to report various contributions, expenditures, and related information (contributor information and fundraiser information), as well as violated Section 52 of the MCFA by accepting contributions from an individual in excess of the contribution limit.

In the answer submitted to the Bureau of Elections ("BOE") on November 14, 2022, the respondent failed to refute the allegations. In fact, the answer barely addressed the subject matter of this complaint. The answer did, however, mention the committee's late filing of the pre-primary campaign statement, which was received by the BOE 12 business days after the deadline and one week *after* the primary. The answer, in large part, blames the respondent's

¹ Per the BOE's December 2, 2022, email, the rebuttal's due date was extended to December 16, 2022.

non-compliance on her ignorance of the requirement that her committee file electronically². The answer also falls flat in this respect, as many of the same defects observed in the electric filing were also present in the invalid paper statement that the respondent had earlier attempted to file.³

The answer also insinuates that the BOE shares blame for the respondent's failures to meet her obligations to file accurate and timely statements. One need only to review the respondent's history of campaign statements with the Macomb County Clerk's office to find that her filing of late and defective reports did not begin with the senate race, or with electronic filing. It has been going on for years. Take for instance the committee SUPPORTERS FOR MONIQUE OWENS registered with the Macomb County Clerk. This committee received 18 Error and Omission notices within a three-year period. In addition, the clerk's website notes that two statements were received 321 calendar days after the due date, and three that were received 165 calendar days after the due date, to sample just a few.⁴ The fault for the senate campaign's late and defective reports, such as the senate campaign's pre-primary campaign statement (received 12 business days late) and post-primary campaign statement (received 45+ business days late) falls to the candidate, not the BOE.

On November 13, 2022, the BOE received an amended pre-primary campaign statement ("CS") from the respondent. This amended filing appears to be an attempt to address the allegations raised in this complaint as well as issues raised in the BOE's October 26, 2022, Notice of Error or Omission.

The differences between the original filing and the amended filing are glaring. The changes reflected in the amended pre-primary CS substantiate the bulk of the allegations made in the complaint. In the following paragraphs, I will describe how the information revealed in the amended filing supports the conclusion that the respondent's filing of the original pre-primary CS violated the MCFA.

Rebuttal: Section 26 violations (section 4 of complaint no. 2022-10-137-226)

1. Failure to report direct contributions

My complaint alleged that the respondent failed to report contributions made through the GoFundMe fundraising platform⁵—specifically a \$50 contribution from Kylah Washington and a \$150 contribution from Yvonne Thomas.

² MCL 169.218

³ <https://cfrsearch.nictusa.com/documents/527247>

⁴ <https://macomb.mi.campaignfinance.us/iDocuments.php?iCommitteeID=10575>

⁵ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/supporters-for-monique-owens-for-state-senator>

Kylah Washington contributions

On the original pre-primary CS, the respondent did not report any contributions from Kylah Washington whatsoever. In contrast, the amended filing reports two separate contributions from Washington: one in the amount of \$50 (presumably the GoFundMe contribution) plus a \$150 contribution. Neither of these contributions were on the original filing.

Therefore, the amended filing shows that the respondent not only failed to report the \$50 GoFundMe contribution on her original pre-primary CS (as alleged) but had also omitted a \$150 contribution from the same which was unknown to me at the time of the complaint, for a total of \$200 in unreported contributions from Kylah Washington.

Yvonne Thomas contributions

On the original pre-primary campaign statement, the respondent did not report a distinct \$150 contribution from Yvonne Thomas. The respondent *did* report contributions of \$900 and \$950 from Yvonne Thomas, but did not report a contribution in the amount of \$150. MCL 169.226(1)(e) requires committees to report each distinct contribution received. Therefore, the original filing's reporting of two contributions in the amount of \$900 and \$950 cannot constitute a valid report of the \$150 GoFundMe contribution. In contrast, the amended filing does report a \$150 direct contribution from Yvonne Thomas.

Therefore, the amended filing shows that the respondent failed to report a \$150 direct contribution from Yvonne Thomas on her original pre-primary CS.

Summary of failures to report direct contributions

In total, the amended filing shows that the respondent failed on her original filing to report at least \$350 in direct contributions and additionally failed to report contributor information for at least one individual contributor (Kylah Washington).

A previous MCFA complaint (no. 2022-06-25-226) against Owens had quoted a significant portion of MCL 169.226(1)(e) verbatim in alleging a violation of the same.

Consequently, I ask the BOE to find that the respondent knowingly violated MCL 169.226(1) by not reporting the \$200 in GoFundMe contributions and the additional \$150 direct contribution from Kylah Washington on the original pre-primary CS.

2. Failure to report in-kind contribution

My complaint further alleged that the respondent failed to report an in-kind contribution of pavilion rental valued at \$150. I presented evidence showing that Yvonne Thomas paid \$150 for the pavilion rental and that the pavilion had been used to host the respondent's June 16, 2022, campaign fundraiser.

The respondent's original pre-primary statement did not report the in-kind contribution. The in-kind contribution was also not mentioned on the July 22, 2022, correspondence to the BOE, which was an attempt to file the pre-primary campaign statement in non-electronic form and therefore rejected. Even if the respondent's committee had been allowed to file paper rather than electronic statements, this contribution likely would have gone unreported but for my filing of this complaint.

Consequently, I ask the Bureau to find that the respondent violated MCL 169.226(1)(e) by failing to report an in-kind contribution valued at \$150 on the original pre-primary CS.

3. Failure to report contributors' full names

My complaint further alleged that the respondent violated the MCFA by failing to report individual contributors using their full names. MCL 169.226(1)(e) explicitly states that each contributor's "full name" must be reported. In fact, it is the very first requirement mentioned in the sentence (emphasis added): "The *full name* of each individual from whom contributions are received..."

The abbreviation or omission of a small part of a contributor's name may perhaps be excused as a de minimis omission. However, reporting a contributor's name using a single component of their name, such as the last name alone, is a significant defect. Regulatory personnel and members of the public who reviewed the respondent's original pre-primary CS would not be able to readily ascertain who had made those contributions. That is unacceptable; the MCFA places responsibility on each committee to obtain that information and include it in the statement.

The respondent's original pre-primary statement identified at least three contributors (Ford, Waltman, and Evans) solely by last names. In contrast, the amended filing of the same statement identifies the contributors by full personal names or committee names. In addition, the amended filing reveals that two of those contributions were made by committees and not by individuals.

For at least two of those three contributions, there is evidence to support that the respondent likely knew the contributors' full names based on personal knowledge and may have knowingly withheld their full names. Take, for instance, "Evans" and "Ford".

- "Evans" – Friends of Warren C. Evans is a candidate committee of Warren Evans, the Wayne County Executive⁶ and one of Metro Detroit's most well-known political figures.
- "Ford" – Cassandra Ford is a member of the City of Eastpointe's Planning Commission. The respondent, as Mayor of Eastpointe, presided over the March 16, 2021, city council

⁶ <https://www.waynecounty.com/elected/executive/biography.aspx>

meeting in which Ford was appointed to the planning commission. The respondent also voted in favor of Ford's appointment to the same.⁷

If the respondent did not know the identity of the above two contributors based on personal knowledge, she could have easily discovered their full names based on records which she was responsible for keeping.

To make matters worse, the manner in which some contributors' names were reported also misled the public by concealing the fact that two of the three contributions came from political committees and not individuals. For example, the original filing reported contributions from "Evans" and "Waltman".

- "Evans – The amended filing reveals that the contribution from "Evans" was actually received from "Friends of Warren C. Evans". The latter is a candidate committee, not an individual.
- "Waltman" – The amended filing also reveals that the contribution from "Waltman" was actually received from "MI HEALTH CHOICE ALLIANCE PAC", a political action committee.⁸ The respondent's identification of the contributor solely by the PAC treasurer's last name, "Waltman", obscured the fact that the contribution was made by a PAC and not an individual.

Members of the public deserved to know that one of the respondent's top funding sources was a PAC and not an individual. They also deserved to know that before the primary election. However, due to the respondent's inaccurate and incomplete statements, the true contributor was not revealed until November 13, 2022—after the *general* election, when it was due before the primary. It is doubtful that this would have been revealed but for my complaint.

The respondent's reporting of contributors using incomplete names not only violated the MCFA but deprived the public of important information about the candidate's funding sources.

Consequently, I ask the BOE to find that the respondent knowingly violated MCL 169.226(1)(e) by failing to report contributors' full names on her original pre-primary CS.

4. Failure to report employers and occupations of contributors who gave more than \$100

My complaint further alleged that the respondent violated MCL 169.226(1)(e) by failing to report (on the committee's original pre-primary CS) the occupations, employers, and principal

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<https://eastpointecitymi.documents-on-demand.com/document/9bdc4820-c7c4-ec11-a375-000c29a59557/City%20Council%20Minutes%20March%202016,%202021.PDF>

⁸ <https://cfrsearch.nictusa.com/committees/519530>

places of business of contributors when required to do so (i.e. for each contributor who cumulatively gave more than \$100 to her committee). My complaint also included evidence supporting that possibility the violation was done knowingly, as the Macomb County Clerk had specifically advised the respondent on November 7, 2019, that occupation and employer information was required for an individual contribution from Stanley Grot in the amount of \$150.

In contrast to the original filing, the amended pre-primary CS includes occupations and employers for the following contributors who cumulatively gave more than \$100 each to the respondent's committee: Cassandra Ford, Anthony Bakko, Yvonne Thomas, Clint Pattah, and Stephanie Moulton.

Consequently, I ask the BOE to find that the respondent knowingly violated MCL 169.226(1)(e) by failing to report contributors' occupation and employer information when required on the original pre-primary CS.

5. Failure to report expenditures

My complaint further alleged that the respondent violated MCL 169.226(1)(j) by failing to report expenditures for food (for a June 16, 2022 fundraiser) and for website services. It was also alleged that the respondent either failed to report or inaccurately reported the vendors for various expenditures. It was also alleged that the respondent violated MCL 169.226(1)(d) by failing to report the total event costs related for a fundraiser.

The complaint also furnished evidence to support that both subsections were violated knowingly, citing past correspondence from the Macomb County Clerk and BOE to the respondent as recently as July 19, 2022.

MCL 169.226(1)(j)

The respondent's original pre-primary CS did not report any expenditures or in-kind contributions of food or website services. In contrast, the amended pre-primary reports a \$737.48 in-kind contribution of food dated June 16, 2022, and a \$47.85 in-kind contribution paid to Wix (a website hosting provider) on May 26, 2022. The absence of these expenditures from the original filing supports that a violation occurred.

Many of the expenditures that were reported on the original pre-primary CS are instead reported as in-kind contributions from the candidate on the amended pre-primary CS. However, there are several in-kind contributions reported in the amended filing that were apparently not reported (as either expenditures or in-kind contributions) on the original filing. For example:

- \$100 - food for event - 5/26/2022 - from Lincoln Brazil to Taco Bar Unlimited

- \$100 - entertainment - 5/26/2022 - from Eric White to DJ Services
- \$100 - entertainment - 5/26/2022 - from Deonda Easley to Epic Entertainment
- \$100 - entertainment - 5/26/2022 - from Heather Kyles to Naturally Funny Talent Agency

The omission of these contributions from the original filing are also likely violations of MCL 169.226(1). In addition, the MCFA requires that in-kind contributions be listed at “fair market value”. There is some evidence to suggest that the amounts reported on the amended filing may not accurately reflect fair market value.

For example, on August 24, 2022, the Macomb County Clerk received from SUPPORTERS FOR MONIQUE OWENS (the respondent’s mayoral candidate committee) a Miscellaneous Filing⁹ which reported an in-kind contribution of DJ services from Owens paid to vendor Eryk White.¹⁰ This contribution was valued at \$250.

Contribution # 2 Name & Address <i>Same as above</i>	PAC Receipt? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes	4. <input type="checkbox"/> Endorsement or Guarantee of Bank Loan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goods Donated or Loaned <input type="checkbox"/> Services Donated <input type="checkbox"/> Goods or Services Purchased by Candidate or Others \$ <i>250</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Goods or Services Purchased by Candidate or Others- LOAN
If over \$100.00 cumulative, please provide: Occupation: Employer Name & Address:	Description <i>DJ services (fundraising event)</i> 5. Date Of Receipt: <i>7/21/2021 - 10/20/21</i> 6. Vendor Name & Address: <i>Eryk White</i>	Click Here for Memo Itemization
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund Raiser Contribution		

The reporting of the above four May 26, 2022, contributions at precisely \$100—one cent below the threshold at which the committee would be required to report the contributors’ occupation and employer information—lacks credibility.

MCL 169.226(1)(d)

My complaint alleged that the reporting of the total cost of the June 16, 2022, barbecue fundraiser (event #1 on the fundraiser schedule) as \$0.00 on the original pre-primary CS constituted a violation of MCL 169.226(1)(d). In contrast, the amended filing reported that the cost of the event was \$1,644.96. In addition, the gross receipts for that event increased by \$740 from the original to the amended filing.

If the figures on the amended filing are correct, then the following may be concluded regarding the respondent’s pre-primary fundraising events:

⁹ <https://campaignfinance.us/docs.macomb.mi/471775997.pdf>

¹⁰ The Miscellaneous Filing spells White’s first name as “Eryk” while the amended pre-primary CS spells the first name as “Eric”. Despite this, the nature of service (DJ services) supports the likelihood that these are references to the same person.

1. Event #1's gross receipts were underreported by \$740.00 on the original filing.
2. Event #1's total costs were underreported by \$1,644.96 on the original filing.
3. Event #2's gross receipts were overreported by \$4,500.00 on the original filing.
4. Event #2's gross receipts were underreported by \$1,000.00 on the original filing.
5. Event #3's gross receipts were underreported by \$85.00 on the original filing.

Event #1	Original	Amended	Change
Gross Receipts	\$1,100.00	\$1,840.00	+ \$740.00
Total cost of event	\$0.00	\$1,644.96	+ \$ 1,644.96

Event #2	Original	Amended	Change
Gross Receipts	\$5,660.00	\$1,160.00	– \$4,500
Total cost of event	\$600.00	\$1,600.00	+ \$1,000

Event #3	Original	Amended	Change
Gross Receipts	\$0.00	\$85.00	+ \$85.00
Total cost of event	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A

The respondent's answer does not even attempt to explain these vast differences.

Consequently, I ask that the BOE find that the respondent knowingly violated MCL 169.226(1)(j) and MCL 169.226(1)(d) by not reporting these expenditures and costs on the original pre-primary CS.

Rebuttal: Section 52 violations (section 4 of complaint 2022-10-137-226)

6. Accepting contributions in excess of the individual contribution limit

My complaint further alleged that the respondent violated MCL 169.252(1)(b) by accepting contributions in excess of the \$2,100 individual contribution limit¹¹ for a senate campaign. Specifically, it was alleged that the committee accepted from Yvonne Thomas direct contributions of \$900 and \$950 (which were reported on the original filing), plus two contributions that were not reported: an \$150 direct contribution (via GoFundMe) and a \$150 in-kind contribution of a pavilion rental, for a total of \$2,150.

¹¹ <https://mertsplus.com/mertserguide/index.php?n=MANUALS.StateLevelOffices>

A comparison of Yvonne Thomas's contributions between the original and amended filings is provided below.

Original¹²

Date	Type	Amount	Cumulative
5/26/2022	DIRECT	\$ 900	\$ 900
6/17/2022	DIRECT	\$ 950	\$ 1,850

Amended¹³

Date	Type	Amount	Cumulative
5/26/2022	DIRECT	\$ 900	\$ 900
5/30/2022	INKIND	\$ 150	\$ 1,050
6/10/2022	INKIND	\$ 200	\$ 1,250
6/10/2022	INKIND	\$ 58	\$ 1,308
6/16/2022	DIRECT	\$ 150	\$ 1,458
6/16/2022	DIRECT	\$ 90	\$ 1,548

A \$950 contribution dated June 17, 2022, is included on the original filing but not on the amended filing. Did the respondent return \$950 to Yvonne Thomas to bring her cumulative contributions below the limit? Did the \$950 represent an amalgamation of contributions from individuals other than Thomas, which were not properly reported as such? The respondent's answer provides no explanation whatsoever for the disappearance of this contribution from the amended filing, leaving the BOE to investigate what truly happened.

In any case, it appears that the respondent either violated MCL 169.252(1)(b) by accepting contributions in excess of the limit or violated MCL 169.226(1)(e) by not reporting the contributions distinctly with each contributor's information.

Consequently, I ask the BOE to determine whether violations of MCL 169.252(1)(b) and/or MCL 169.226(1)(e) occurred.

¹² https://cfrsearch.nictusa.com/documents/529450/details/filing/contributions?schedule=*&changes=0&page=1

¹³ https://cfrsearch.nictusa.com/documents/538786/details/filing/contributions?schedule=*&changes=0&page=1

Rebuttal: Additional Section 26 violations (section 5 of complaint 2022-10-137-226)

In Section 5 of my original complaint, I made two allegations that, despite a lack of available supporting evidence at the time, I believed would be supported after further inquiry. Once again, the information revealed in the amended pre-primary CS (after my complaint was filed) serves as evidence to support those allegations.

7. Failure to report some contributions and contributor information distinctly, attributing them to person(s) other than the actual contributor

The respondent's amended pre-primary CS provides evidence to support this allegation.

The original pre-primary CS reported a \$1,000 contribution (for \$1,000 cumulative) dated June 16, 2022, from "Ford". In contrast, the amended pre-primary CS reported a \$240 contribution (for \$240 cumulative) on the same date from "Cassandra Ford"—a reduction of \$760.¹⁴

The original pre-primary CS reported a \$950 contribution (for \$1,850 cumulative) dated June 17, 2022, (one day after the fundraiser) from Yvonne Thomas. In contrast, the amended pre-primary CS does not report a \$950 contribution, and Thomas's cumulative direct contributions are reported as \$1,548—a reduction of \$302.

Along with this, the amended pre-primary CS reports several contributions, also dated June 16, 2022, which were not reported on the original filing. Most of the contributors' names were not mentioned on the original filing whatsoever. An annotated list is provided below.

Also, all of the contributions listed below, except for the \$100 one from Clint Pattah, are in multiples of \$30, which was the advertised per-plate price for the event.

Date	Contributor	Amount	Change
6/16/2022	Cassandra Ford	240	Decrease of \$760
6/16/2022	Deonda Easley	180	Not on original CS
6/16/2022	Kylah Washington	150	Not on original CS
6/16/2022	Monique Owens	150	
6/16/2022	Yvonne Thomas	150	
6/16/2022	Wanetta Love	120	Not on original CS
6/16/2022	Jeremie Mccoy	120	Not on original CS
6/16/2022	Tia Williams	120	Not on original CS
6/16/2022	Clint Pattah	100	

¹⁴ As both "Ford" and "Cassandra Ford" were reported with the same street address, we may conclude that these are references to the same person.