

News from the FPPC



California Fair Political Practices Commission
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Additional information on each of the enforcement cases listed below can be found in the January agenda on the FPPC website at www.fppc.ca.gov. FPPC agendas are distributed and posted on the agency website at least 10 days prior to each monthly meeting.

The web version of the agenda includes links to the stipulations agreed to between the FPPC Enforcement Division and the individuals and organizations subject to the fines, or the default decisions proposed to the Commission. Exhibits in support of the stipulations and proposed default decisions are also available on the website. If you need further assistance, please contact the FPPC communications office at (916) 322-7761 or press@fppc.ca.gov.

I. The following are enforcement decisions approved by the Fair Political Practices Commission at its regular monthly meeting held on Thursday, January 18, 2024. Decisions are listed by category and include a brief summary of each case and the total amount of any administrative fine in each case.

Laundered Campaign Contributions

In the Matter of Alex Villanueva, Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018, Cine D. Ivery, and Manuel Gomez; FPPC No. 18/1097. Staff: Neal Bucknell, Senior Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. Alex Villanueva and Alex Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018 are represented by Brian Hildreth of Bell, McAndrews & Hiltachk. Cine D. Ivery is represented by Beverly Grossman Palmer of Strumwasser & Woocher, LLP. Manuel Gomez is represented by Kirt J. Hopson. Alex Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018 was Villanueva's candidate-controlled committee. Cine D. Ivery served as the Committee's treasurer. In August and September 2018, Gomez made 14 campaign contributions in the names of persons other than themselves to Villanueva for Los Angeles Sheriff 2018, in violation of Government Code Section 84301 (10 counts). The Committee, Villanueva, and Ivery failed to report required occupation and employer information for a contribution received from Gomez, in violation of Government Code Section 84211, subdivision (f) (1 count). Also, they failed to report similar information for a contribution that was reported as received from Gomez's son-in-law and failed to return the contribution, in violation of Government Code Sections 84211, subdivision (f); 85700; and California Code of Regulations, Title 2, Section 18570 (1 count). **Fine: \$57,500.**

In the Matter of North Star Alliances, LLC, Ernesto Morales, and Lauren Morales-Chitay; FPPC No. 20/77. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Ann Flaherty, Special Investigator. The respondents are represented by Dmitry Gorin of Eisner and Gorin LLP. Respondents made contributions in the name of another and failed to disclose that they were acting as an intermediary, in violation of Government Code Sections 84301 and 84302 (5 counts). **Fine: \$22,500.**

Recordkeeping

In the Matter of Fiona Ma for State Treasurer 2018, Fiona Ma, and James Santos; FPPC No. 22/195. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. This matter arose from an audit performed by the Franchise Tax Board's Political Reform Audit Program. The respondents are represented by James Sutton of The Sutton Law Firm. Fiona Ma was a successful candidate for California State Treasurer in the June 5, 2018 Primary Election and November 6, 2018 General Election. Fiona Ma for State Treasurer 2018 was Fiona Ma's candidate-controlled committee. James Santos served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Ma, and Santos failed to timely disclose and itemize subvendor payments, in violation of Government Code Sections 84303 and 84211 (1 count). Additionally, the Committee, Ma, and Santos failed to maintain campaign records for subvendor payments, in violation of Government Code Section 84104 (1 count); and failed to timely disclose individual credit card charges, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 and Regulation 18421.9 (1 count). **Fine: \$11,500.**

Conflict of Interests

In the Matter of Kellie Schneider; FPPC No. 19/1775. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Kellie Schneider was a former official at the California Earthquake Authority. In that capacity, Schneider had a conflict of interest under Government Code Section 87100 of the Political Reform Act and Government Code Section 1090 when she participated in and authorized a contract between the California Earthquake Authority and her financial interest, WeidnerCA (1 count.) Additionally, Schneider failed to timely report a financial interest on a statement of economic interest, in violation of Government Code Section 87300 (1 count.) **Fine: \$5,500.**

Cash and In-Kind Contributions

In the Matter of Kern Citizens for Patient Rights, Larry Hiestand, and Jeff Jarvis; FPPC No. 23/819. Staff: Commission Counsel, Marissa Corona and Special Investigator, Kaitlin Osborn. Kern Citizens for Patient Rights was a local general purpose ballot measure committee. Larry Hiestand served as the Committee's treasurer and Jeff Jarvis served as the Committee's principal officer. The Committee, Hiestand and Jarvis failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements and one semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200 and 84200.5 (1 count); and improperly accepted cash contributions of \$100 or more, in violation of Government Code Section 84300 (1 count). **Fine: \$5,000.**

Default Proceedings

In the Matter of Anna Song and Friends of Anna Song for County Board of Education 2020; FPPC No. 20/950. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel and Roone Petersen, Special Investigator. Anna Song was an unsuccessful incumbent candidate for Santa Clara County Board of Education, Trustee of Area 5, in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Friends of Anna Song for County Board of Education for 2020 is Song's candidate-controlled committee. Song served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Song failed to timely file eight semi-annual campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Section 84200 (4 counts). Additionally, the Committee and Song failed to timely file four pre-election campaign statements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84200.8, and Regulation 18405 (3 counts). Further, the Committee and Song failed to timely file eleven 24-hour reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84203 and 84203.3 (8 counts). **Fine: \$63,500.**

II. The following are enforcement decisions approved through the streamline penalty process and were executed by the Chief of Enforcement per Regulation 18360.2 following the January 18, 2024 meeting. Decisions are listed by category and include a brief summary of each case and the total amount of any administrative fine in each case.

Behested Payments

In the Matter of Michael Tubbs; FPPC No. 18/140. Staff: Theresa Gilbertson, Senior Commission Counsel and Kaitlin Osborn, Special Investigator. Michael Tubbs, in their capacity as Mayor for the City of Stockton, failed to timely file eight behested payment reports, in violation of Government Code Section 84224 (8 counts). **Fine: \$3,800 (Tiers One & Two).**

Advertisements

In the Matter of Mountain View Professional Firefighters Political Action Committee and Melton Wong; FPPC No. 20/921. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. The respondents were represented by Richard Rios and Rachael Rutkowski of Olson Remcho LLP. Mountain View Professional Firefighters Political Action Committee is a city general purpose committee who was active in the City of Mountain View prior to the November 3, 2020 General Election. Melton Wong served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Wong failed to include the Committee's full name and the "not authorized" language on four mailer advertisements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (4 counts). Additionally, the Committee and Wong failed to timely file an amendment to its statement of organization to disclose its change in jurisdiction from state to city, in violation of Government Code Section 84103 (1 count). Finally, the Committee failed to timely disclose certain expenditures on a pre-election campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (1 count). **Fine: \$3,770 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Dunsmuir Association of Ratepayers & Taxpayers (DART) and Leslie Wilde; FPPC No. 23/798. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Roone Peterson, Special Investigator. DART was a local primarily formed committee in support of Ahmet Tasci, Dena Marlatt, and Sandra Vaughan for Dunsmuir City Council and Treasurer in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Wilde served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Wilde failed to timely file a pre-election campaign statement and a semi-annual campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84200 (2 counts). Furthermore, the Committee and Wilde failed to include proper advertising and mailing disclosures, in violation of Government Code Section 84502 (2 counts). Finally, the Committee and Wilde failed to include the names of the candidates the Committee was primarily formed to support, in violation of Government Code Section 84102 (1 count). **Fine: \$1,701 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of Paul Courtney; FPPC No. 22/764. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. Paul Courtney is a local Independent Expenditure Committee. The Committee failed to timely file a 24-hour report and an independent expenditure campaign statement, in violation of Government Code Sections 84204 and 84200 (2 counts). Furthermore, the Committee failed to include the "Ad paid for by" and "Not authorized" disclaimers on advertisements, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (2 counts). **Fine: \$1,506 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Committee to Elect Ahmet Tasci to the City Council 2020 and Ahmet Tasci; FPPC No. 20/967. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Rooney Peterson, Special Investigator. Ahmet Tasci was an unsuccessful candidate for Dunsmuir City Council in the November 3, 2020 General Election. Committee to Elect Ahmet Tasci to the City Council 2020 was a Tasci's candidate-controlled committee and they served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Tasci failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements, a semi-annual campaign statement, and a 24-hour report, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5, 84200, and 84203 (4 counts). Additionally, the Committee and Tasci failed to include the proper advertising and mailing disclosures, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (1 count). **Fine: \$1,458 (Tiers One & Two).**

In the Matter of One Temecula Valley PAC and David Matics; FPPC No. 23/815. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Laura Mandler, Political Reform Consultant. One Temecula Valley PAC is a local general purpose committee. David Matics served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee and Matics failed to include the proper advertising disclosures on two types of campaign signs, in violation of Government Code Section 84502 (2 counts). **Fine: \$806 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of Athena Medical Group; FPPC No. 18/1397. Staff: Artin Berjikly, Senior Commission Counsel and Lance Hachigian, Special Investigator. Athena Medical Group is an independent expenditure committee. Dr. William Khieu served as the Committee's treasurer and principal officer. The Committee and Khieu failed to include the proper advertising disclosures and disclaimers on a newspaper advertisement and yard signs distributed prior to the November 6, 2018, General Election, in violation of Government Code Sections 84502 and 84506.5 (4 counts). **Fine: \$428 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of CA Political Rebuild Team, Orrin Heatlie; FPPC No. 20/665. Staff: Alex Rose, Commission Counsel and Jay Gehres, Special Investigator. CA Political Rebuild Team is a state general purpose committee. Orrin Heatlie served as the Committee's principal officer and treasurer. The Committee and Heatlie failed to include the proper advertising disclosure on a billboard advertisement purchased prior to the September 14, 2021 election, in violation of Government Code Section 84504.2 (1 count). **Fine: \$112 (Tier One).**

Lobbying Reporting

In the Matter of Elwyn California; FPPC No. 20/469. Staff: Chance Felkins, Commission Counsel. Elwyn California a \$5,000 filer and lobbyist employer, failed to timely file six lobbyist employer quarterly reports, in violation of Government Code Section 86117 (1 count). **Fine: \$350 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of California Advocacy, LLC.; FPPC 23/784. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Laura Mandler, Political Reform Consultant. California Advocacy, LLC, a lobbying firm, failed to timely disclose lobbying activity on two quarterly lobbyist reports, in violation of Government Code Section 86114 (2 counts). **Fine: \$251 (Tier One).**

Campaign Late Reporter

In the Matter of Dominic Foppoli and Friends of Dominic Foppoli for Windsor Town Council 2018; FPPC No. 21/362. Staff: Neal Bucknell, Senior Commission Counsel and George Aradi, Special Investigator. On campaign statements filed for the reporting periods

ending June 30 and September 22, 2018, respondents failed to timely report Schedule E expenditures totaling approximately \$12,849 and \$7,789, respectively, in violation of Government Code Section 84211 (2 counts). **Fine: \$1,405 (Tier Two).**

Campaign Late Filer

In the Matter of Carla J Neal for Assembly 2018, Carla J. Neal, and Stephen A. Smith; FPPC No. 18/714. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel. Carla J. Neal was a successful candidate for State Assembly, District 5, in the June 5, 2018 Primary Election but was defeated in the November 6, 2018 General Election. Carla J Neal for Assembly 2018 was Neal's candidate-controlled committee. Stephen A. Smith served as the Committee's treasurer. The Committee, Neal, and Smith failed to timely file an amendment to its statement of organization to disclose its date of qualification, in violation of Government Code Sections 84101 and 84103 (1 count). Additionally, the Committee, Neal, and Smith failed to timely file two pre-election campaign statements and three 24-hour contribution reports, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200.5 and 84203 (5 counts); and failed to timely file six semi-annual campaign statements electronically and/or in paper format, in violation of Government Code Sections 84200 and 84605 (6 counts). **Fine: \$2,619 (Tier One).**

Statement of Economic Interests Late Filer

In the Matter of Greg Eckert; FPPC No. 20/781. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel. Greg Eckert, a Planning Commissioner for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, failed to timely file a 2020 and 2021 Annual Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Government Code Section 87203 (2 counts). **Fine: \$1,200 (Tier Two).**

In the Matter of John Redmond; FPPC No. 21/211. Staff: Jenna C. Rinehart, Commission Counsel. John Redmond, a City Council Member for the City of Mount Shasta, failed to timely file a 2019 and 2020 Annual Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Government Code Section 87203 (2 counts). **Fine: \$400 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Lawrence Ratto; FPPC No. 23/748. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Amber Rodriguez, Staff Services Analyst. Lawrence Ratto, a Planning Commissioner for the County of Alameda, failed to timely file a 2022 Annual Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Government Code Section 87203 (1 count). **Fine: \$200 (Tier One).**

In the Matter of Ivy Duarte; FPPC No. 23/749. Staff: James M. Lindsay, Chief of Enforcement and Amber Rodriguez, Staff Services Analyst. Ivy Duarte, a Planning Commissioner for the City of South Gate, failed to timely file a 2022 Annual Statement of Economic Interests, in violation of Government Code Section 87203 (1 count). **Fine: \$200 (Tier One).**