

**Agenda**  
**Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission**  
 901 S Kansas Ave  
 Topeka, KS 66612  
 November 20, 2024  
 1:00 p.m.

**1:00 p.m.** Call meeting to order

Review and approve today’s meeting agenda and the October 23, 2024, meeting minutes

Advisory Opinion

- Advisory Opinion 2024-03

Executive Director’s Report

- Campaign Finance Update – General Election
- Annual Report

General Topics

- Procedural Regulation Subcommittee Update

Civil Penalty Assessments

Candidates and Treasurers

Donald Anderson, Candidate District Judge	Christina Haswood, Candidate State Senate
Zachary Hawkins, Candidate and Treasurer for State Representative	Angela Hecke, Candidate District Judge
Joshua Jones, Candidate and Treasurer for State Representative	James Leis, Candidate Sheriff
Mark Locke, Candidate Sheriff	George Miller, Treasurer Sheriff
Tom Moody, Candidate County Commissioner	Greg Riat, Candidate County Commissioner
Ephren Taylor, Candidate State Senate	

Political Action Committee and Party Committee Treasurers

Steven Watson, Treasurer Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 441 PAC	Jonathon Westbrook, Treasurer Kansas Black Republican Council
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Civil Penalty Waiver Request

- Taiasha Nichols, Treasurer  
Unified Government Commissioner

Civil Fine Hearings

- Complaint No. 788 – Patrick Schmidt  
Candidate for State Senate

- Complaint No. 784 – Joshua Bargdill  
Treasurer for Harvey County Treasurer
- Complaint Nos. 786 and 787– Christopher Parisho, Candidate for State Representative,  
and Melissa Stout, Treasurer for State Representative
- Complaint No. 785 – Mark Llamas  
Candidate for Harvey County Treasurer

Executive Session

Recessed Session

Next Meeting Date: January 22, 2025

**4:00 p.m.** Adjournment

**Minutes**  
**Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission**  
**901 S. Kansas Ave.**  
**Topeka, KS 66612**  
**October 23, 2024**  
**1:00 p.m.**

Members Present

Nick Hale, Chair  
Jerry Hellmer, Vice Chair - via teleconference  
Tess Ramirez  
Chris Burger – via videoconference  
Beau Jackson  
Samuel Klaassen

Staff Present

Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kaitlyn Bull-Stewart, General Counsel  
Payge Quintana-Padgett, Office Manager  
Jesse Burris, Conflict Counsel

The monthly meeting for the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission was called to order at 1:01 p.m. by Chairman Hale.

Minutes

After review of the agenda and the September 25, 2024, meeting minutes, Chairman Hale asked for a motion to approve the agenda and minutes as written, unless anyone could identify any corrections. Mr. Klaassen moved to approve the agenda and minutes. Ms. Ramirez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Director’s Report

Mr. Skoglund presented the draft legislative recommendations that will be included in the Annual Report which will be presented at the November 20, 2024, meeting. The draft legislative recommendations are the same as those that were presented in 2023. The recommendations are mandatory electronic filing for all state candidates; the ethics cleanup megabill which is to remove extraneous text from both Chapters 25 and 46, correcting “paid for” attributions for social media, adding clarity, and removing statutory conflicts in both Chapters 25 and 46; allow for the support of federal candidates; required campaign account termination; and make political action committee and party committees responsible for report filing instead of solely the treasurer. Discussion ensued.

Civil Penalty Assessments

**July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report**

Brenda Holliday-Stanton Treasurer for Jackson County Republican Central Committee	\$150
Mark Schnittker, Treasurer for Kingman County Democratic Central Committee	\$300
Herbert Schwartzkopt, Treasurer for	\$100

Trego County Democratic Central Committee

**September 10, 2024, Lobbyist Employment and Expenditures Report**

Ty Dragoo, Lobbyist for  
Prairie Watch

\$700

Civil Penalty Waiver Requests

Mr. Skoglund presented the waiver request form and supporting documentation from Christopher Breeden, treasurer for the Wabaunsee County Democratic Central Committee. Mr. Skoglund recommended a full waiver. Discussion ensued. Mr. Burger moved to waive the civil penalty in full. Ms. Ramirez seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Skoglund presented the waiver request form and supporting documentation from Brenda Holliday-Stanton, former treasurer for the Jackson County Republican Central Committee. Mr. Skoglund did not have a recommendation for a waiver. Discussion ensued. Ms. Ramirez moved to approve the waiver in full. Mr. Klaassen seconded the motion. Further discussion ensued. The motion did not pass with Mr. Burger and Mr. Hellmer voting no. No alternate motions were made.

Civil Fine Hearings

At 1:33 p.m., the hearing in Complaint No. 750 commenced with Mr. Jackson serving as the Presiding Officer. Mr. Jackson began with a procedural summary and requested all parties enter appearances. Ms. Bull-Stewart entered appearance for herself and the Complainant. Mr. Skoglund, Respondent, Patrick Kucera, also appeared. Ms. Bull-Stewart offered her opening statements. Mr. Kucera decided to wait to give his opening statement until the complainant's case in chief was closed. Mr. Burger requested that Ms. Bull-Stewart provide the statutory authority for Counts 37 and 38 of the complaint.

At 1:44 p.m., Ms. Bull-Stewart requested that Mr. Kucera be placed under oath for the hearing and to aid in identifying the witness, Patricia Reitz. Mr. Jackson allowed for that request. Ms. Quintana-Padgett administered the oath to Mr. Kucera. Mr. Kucera responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Reitz joined the hearing by videoconference. At 1:47 p.m., Mr. Jackson requested that Ms. Reitz be placed under oath. Ms. Quintana-Padgett administered the oath. Ms. Reitz responded in the affirmative. Ms. Bull-Stewart began direct examination of Ms. Reitz. Upon completion of direct examination, Mr. Kucera began cross-examination of Ms. Reitz. Upon completion of cross examination, Ms. Bull-Stewart began redirect examination. Upon completion of redirect examination, Mr. Kucera began re-cross examination. Upon completion of re-cross examination, the Commission began asking questions of Ms. Reitz. Ms. Reitz was then dismissed as a witness.

At 2:46 p.m., Ms. Bull-Stewart called Mr. Skoglund as her next witness with the permission of the Presiding Officer. Ms. Quintana-Padgett administered the oath to Mr. Skoglund. Mr. Skoglund responded in the affirmative. Ms. Bull-Stewart began direct examination of Mr. Skoglund. Upon completion of the direct examination, Mr. Kucera began cross examination of Mr. Skoglund. Upon completion of the cross examination, the Commission began asking questions of Mr. Skoglund.

At 3:23 p.m., Mr. Jackson called for a recess. The hearing came back to order at 3:35 p.m. Questioning of Mr. Skoglund by the Commission resumed. Upon completion of questioning by the Commission, Mr. Skoglund was released as a witness.

At 3:46 p.m., Mr. Kucera began giving his opening statements.

At 4:07 p.m., Ms. Bull-Stewart began giving her closing arguments.

At 4:16 p.m., Mr. Kucera began giving his closing arguments.

The Commission agreed to deliberate in a recessed session. At 4:37 p.m., Chairman Hale stated, "I move that the Commission recess this open meeting, with conflict counsel, Jesse Burris, present, to discuss matters related to confidential investigations pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4156 and K.S.A. 25-4161 and for good cause as provided by K.A.R. 19-6-2. Justification for recess is so the Commission can exercise quasi-judicial functions when deliberating matters related to said confidential investigations, as contemplated by K.S.A. 75-4319(g)(1). The open meeting shall be resumed at 4:50 p.m." Ms. Ramirez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 4:50 p.m., the Commission returned to open session. At 4:51 p.m., Chairman Hale stated, "I move that the Commission recess this open meeting, with conflict counsel, Jesse Burris, present, to discuss matters related to confidential investigations pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4156 and K.S.A. 25-4161 and for good cause as provided by K.A.R. 19-6-2. Justification for recess is so the Commission can exercise quasi-judicial functions when deliberating matters related to said confidential investigations, as contemplated by K.S.A. 75-4319(g)(1). The open meeting shall be resumed at 5:00 p.m." Mr. Klaassen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

At 5:00 p.m., the Commission returned to open session. Upon return to open session, Mr. Jackson stated that the Commission had found that no violation of the Kansas Campaign Finance Act occurred. Mr. Jackson asked for a motion to confirm those findings. Chairman Hale moved to conclude this meeting and find that no violation occurred. Mr. Klaassen seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Burger moved to allow Mr. Jackson to execute the order. Mr. Hellmer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The hearing on Complaint No. 750 was concluded.

Chairman Hale proposed to continue all other matters scheduled, including Complaint No. 790. Chairman Hale asked if there was cause to meet early at the November 20, 2024, meeting. Discussion ensued. Mr. Klaassen moved to move Complaint No. 790 to the January 22, 2025, Commission meeting. Mr. Burger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Hale asked for a motion to continue the remaining agenda to the November 20, 2024, meeting. Mr. Jackson moved to continue. Ms. Ramirez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

#### Next Meeting Date

Chairman Hale announced that the next meeting would be held on November 20, 2024.

## Adjournment

At 5:08 p.m., Chairman Hale stated that if there were no further items to discuss, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Ms. Ramirez moved to adjourn. Mr. Klaassen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.



## GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

<https://ethics.kansas.gov>

November 20, 2024

Opinion No. 2024-03

Jake Eastes, *Professional Geologist*  
Conservation Division  
Kansas Corporation Commission  
500 E. 20<sup>th</sup> St.  
Hays, KS 67601

Synopsis: A state employee whose job duties include regulating oil and gas wells for the Kansas Corporation Commission may create a Geological Evaluation and Prospect Business so long as the employee complies with the relevant state governmental ethics law. A state employee who creates Business A that transacts with Business B has a substantial interest in Business B if the employee is compensated by Business A with over \$2,000.00 worth of fees or commissions associated with the transaction.

Cited herein: K.S.A. 46-229; K.S.A. 46-233; K.S.A. 46-235; K.S.A. 46-241; K.S.A. 46-286.

Dear Mr. Eastes:

In response to your October 21, 2024, letter, this opinion is provided by the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission ("Commission"), concerning application of the state governmental ethics law, K.S.A. 46-214a *et seq.* The Commission's jurisdiction is limited to applicability of this law. This opinion, provided pursuant to K.S.A. 46-254, does not address whether some other statutory system, common law theory, agency rule, or regulation applies to your inquiry.

### FACTUAL STATEMENT

You state you are currently employed as a Professional Geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission, Conservation Division and, in your position, you do the following:

- recommend approval or denial of various applications submitted by entities in the oil and gas industry, although final authorization is up to the KCC Commissioners,
- enforce KCC gas gathering and UIC/injection well regulations,
- review gas well test reports,
- monitor monthly production from the Hugoton/Pomona gas wells, and
- provide expert testimony for KCC hearings.

While working for the KCC, you would like to create a Geological Evaluation and Prospect Business where you would perform geological evaluations and then sell oil and gas “Prospect(s)” to entities in the oil and gas industry in exchange for a monetary fee and an Overriding Royalty Interest in the oil or gas produced. You presented the Commission with a Hypothetical Prospect Sale where you indicate your business would receive \$2,500.00 with a 3% overriding royalty interest assignment to every barrel of oil or thousand cubic feet of gas sold from the target tracts of land outlined in the “Prospect.”

## QUESTIONS

1. May you, as a Professional Geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission, operate a geological evaluation and prospect business while employed by the KCC?
2. Additionally, may your geological evaluation and prospect business own overriding royalty interests in oil and gas producing wells that are in the State of Kansas?

## ANALYSIS AND OPINION

1. May you, as a Professional Geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission, operate a geological evaluation and prospect business while still employed by the KCC?

The Commission first addressed this question in Advisory Opinion 2001-09. There are five state governmental ethics law statutes referenced in Advisory Opinion 2001-09 that apply. First, K.S.A. 46-233(a)(1) relevantly states:

No state officer or employee shall in the capacity as such officer or employee be substantially involved in the preparation of or participate in the making of a contract with any person or business by which such officer or employee is employed or in whose business such officer or employee or any member of such officer's or employee's immediate family has a substantial interest[.]

Further, K.S.A. 46-229(d) defines a substantial interest to mean, among other things, “[i]f an individual or an individual's spouse holds the position of officer, director, associate, partner or proprietor of any business, the individual has a substantial interest in that business, irrespective of the amount of compensation received by the individual or individual's spouse.”

As a KCC employee, you are prohibited by K.S.A. 46-233(a)(1) from being substantially involved in the preparation of or from participating in the making of a contract between the KCC and your geological evaluation and prospect business because you have a substantial interest in your business as its proprietor. However, the prohibition does not apply to contracts that are let after competitive bidding has been advertised for public notice nor does it apply to contracts for services or property that have the price or rate fixed by law. K.S.A. 46-233(d).

If the two outlined exceptions do not apply and you participate in the preparation or making of a contract with your business in your capacity as a KCC employee, then operating your business may violate K.S.A. 46-233(a)(1).

The next statute is K.S.A. 46-235, which relevantly states:

No state officer or employee shall accept compensation for performance of official duties, other than that to which such person is entitled for such performance . . . [and] [t]he receipt of wages or salary from an individual's non-state employer during a period of service as a state officer or employee shall not be construed as compensation for performance of official duties.

So long as you are not being paid for the performance of your official job duties as part of operating your business, then operating your business would not violate K.S.A. 46-235.

K.S.A. 46-241 is also relevant, and it prohibits any state officer or employee from disclosing or using "confidential information acquired in the course of his or her official duties in order to further his or her own economic interest or those of any other person."

If you have access to confidential information as part of your KGC employment, then you may not disclose or use that confidential information to further the interests of you, your business, or anyone else.

Finally, K.S.A. 46-286(a) should also be considered and it states: "No state officer or employee, in the officer's or employee's official capacity, shall participate directly in the licensure, inspection or administration or enforcement of any regulation of . . . any outside organization with which the officer or employee holds a position."

To comply with K.S.A. 46-286, you must ensure that you are not directly involved in the licensure, inspection or administration or enforcement of any regulation of your business.

2. Additionally, may your geological evaluation and prospect business own overriding royalty interests in oil and gas producing wells that are in the State of Kansas?

You also ask if the state governmental ethics laws prohibit your business from owning an overriding royalty interest in oil and gas wells in Kansas. Advisory Opinion 2001-09 does not address this question.

K.S.A. 46-229(e) defines a substantial interest to include:

If an individual or an individual's spouse receives compensation which is a portion or percentage of each separate fee or commission paid to a business or combination of businesses, the individual has a substantial interest in any client or customer who pays fees or commissions to the business or combination of businesses from which fees or commissions the individual or the individual's spouse, either individually or collectively, received an aggregate of \$2,000 or more in the preceding calendar year.

Based on the hypothetical you presented in your request, your business (Business A) will be receiving \$2,500.00 and a 3% overriding royalty interest assignment for every barrel of oil or thousand cubic feet of gas sold from the target tracts of land included in the "Prospect" purchased

by the oil and gas company (Business B). The current structure of your hypothetical prospect sale will likely result in you having a substantial interest in every oil and gas company that your business enters a Prospect Sale Agreement with.

In the hypothetical, you would receive compensation from Business A which is a portion or percentage of the fee or commission paid to Business A by Business B in the sale. If the portion of the fee or commission that you receive as compensation from Business A's transaction with Business B exceeds an aggregate of \$2,000.00 per calendar year, then you have a substantial interest in Business B. Consequently, the state governmental ethics laws regulating the interaction of a state employee with entities in which the employee has a substantial interest apply.

Additionally, if you are required to file a statement of substantial interest annually with the Commission, then you should ensure you report your substantial interest in each applicable oil and gas company that you enter a Prospect Sale Agreement with. Specifically, this would apply to oil and gas companies where you receive an aggregate of \$2,000.00 per calendar year in compensation from the fees and commissions generated by each oil and gas company's respective Prospect Sale Agreement with your business.

Under the facts presented, the state governmental ethics laws would not prohibit you from operating your business so long as the statutes outlined above are followed.

Sincerely,

Nick Hale, Chairman

By Direction of the Commission

NH: KBS: pqp

Friday, October 18, 2024

RECEIVED

OCT 21 2024

To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Jake Eastes, and I am sending this letter requesting an advisory opinion from the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission concerning the application of the governmental ethics laws (K.S.A. 46-215 et seq.) regarding my questions listed on page two.

KS Governmental Ethics Commission

**State of Kansas Employment Background:**

I am currently employed as a Professional Geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission – Conservation Division. At the KCC I recommend approval or denial to my Supervisor, the Conservation Legal Department, and the Commissioners concerning various applications involving UIC/Injection wells, unitizations, horizontal wells, well location exceptions, production allowables, alternate tract units, flaring, and vacuum or high-volume pumps. I enforce the Commission's gas gathering and UIC/Injection well regulations, I review gas well test reports, and I monitor monthly production from Hugoton/Panoma gas wells. From time to time, I provide expert testimony for Commission hearings that are pertinent to my duties at the KCC.

To summarize or make clearer, my job duties entail oil and gas companies submitting applications to:

1. Inject water into wells called injection wells.
2. Unitize control of the acreage that comprises an oil/gas field for the consolidated implementation of a waterflood operation.
3. Drill a Horizontal well.
4. Drill a well closer than the standard setback distance from any lease or unit boundary.
5. Request an exception to the statewide production allowable for a single well or lease.
6. Form an Alternate-Tract Unit in the Hugoton/Panoma Gas Field.
7. Flare natural gas.
8. Produce oil/gas on a vacuum or utilize high-volume pumps.

I then evaluate geological, hydrological, and production data to ensure that these various applications meet Kansas rules and regulations. I then make recommendations for approval or denial of these applications to my supervisor or the KCC-Conservation Division Legal Department. My recommendations then get sent to the KCC Commissioners for final judgment.

## Questions:

- 1.) **May this Professional Geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission operate a geological evaluation and prospect business while still employed by the State?**
  
- 2.) **Additionally, can the subject geological evaluation and prospect business own overriding royalty interests in oil and gas producing wells that are in the state of Kansas?**

### **Geological Evaluation and Prospect Business Structure Summary:**

Through my Geological and oil and gas industry expertise I would formulate an oil and gas drilling "Prospect" with the intent to find and produce oil or gas in economical quantities. This is accomplished by compiling data into maps, cross-sections, and graphs that produce an accurate interpretation of the subsurface and explain why oil or gas is likely to be found in economical quantities in a specific area. The interpretation along with the explanation is then further compiled into a marketable oil and gas drilling "Prospect". This Prospect is then sold to an oil and gas company for a monetary fee, commonly referred to as the "Prospect Generation Fee". Then if the company who purchased the prospect elect to drill at a location proposed in the prospect and oil and gas is found in economical quantities, a small percentage of an Overriding Royalty Interest of every barrel of oil or cubic foot of gas that is sold from the proposed target acreage is then transferred to the Geological Evaluation & Prospect Business.

Once the Prospect is sold, the Geological Evaluation & Prospect Business relinquishes control of it, and it is in the hands of the purchasing oil and gas company to decide whether to drill at its direction or not. Only if a well is drilled, completed, and oil or gas is ultimately sold will the Geological Evaluation & Prospect Business receive the Overriding Royalty Interest in the well.

#### Hypothetical Prospect Sale:

Prospect Generation Fee:	\$2,500
Proposed Overriding Royalty Interest Percentage Assignment:	3%
Prospect Sale Agreement:	\$2,500 w/ 3% ORRI

*Oil Company X agrees to purchase Prospect A for a \$2,500 generation fee and a 3% ORRI assignment to every barrel of oil or thousand cubic feet of gas sold from the target tracts of land outlined in the subject Prospect.*

If allowed to operate this subject business, I intend to conduct all workings external of my required State of Kansas job duties. All work would be done at my home residence, outside of my required working hours. No data or information available exclusively to my State of Kansas job duties will be utilized in any manner within the proposed Geological Evaluation & Prospect Business.

Friday, October 18, 2024

**Previous Opinion Given by Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission for Same or Similar Question**

In 2001 the Governmental Ethics Commission gave an opinion to a similar question in a similar situation. The Opinion number was 2001-09 and the single question posed to the commission was “*may this environmental geologist for the Kansas Corporation Commission operate a geological evaluation and prospect business while still employed by the State?*” The summary opinion given was “*As long as statutes are followed, ethics laws do not prohibit environmental geologist for KCC from operating a geological evaluation and prospect business while still employed by State*”.

This opinion was given more than 20 years ago so I was unsure if the same laws would produce the same opinion given the passage of time and the possibility of changes made to those laws in the span of time. Differing from the question asked in 2001 is my additional question asking if the Geological Evaluation and Prospect Business could own Overriding Royalty Interests in oil and gas producing wells in Kansas. I know that in the past, Geologists that have worked in my same position have had direct ownership of Overriding Royalty Interests in oil and gas wells in Kansas while they were employed by the KCC. Although, these Geologists received these Overriding Royalty Interests before they were ever employed by the State or KCC.

Thank you for your consideration in providing an opinion on this matter. If there are any questions or a need for clarification on any of the subjects, please feel free to contact me at any of the methods listed below.

**Jake Eastes**, *Professional Geologist*

Conservation Division

Kansas Corporation Commission

Home Mailing Address: 500 E 20<sup>th</sup> Street | Hays, KS | 67601

Office (316) 337-6216 | Cell (316) 217-5478 | Personal Cell (785) 410-3310

jake.eastes@ks.gov

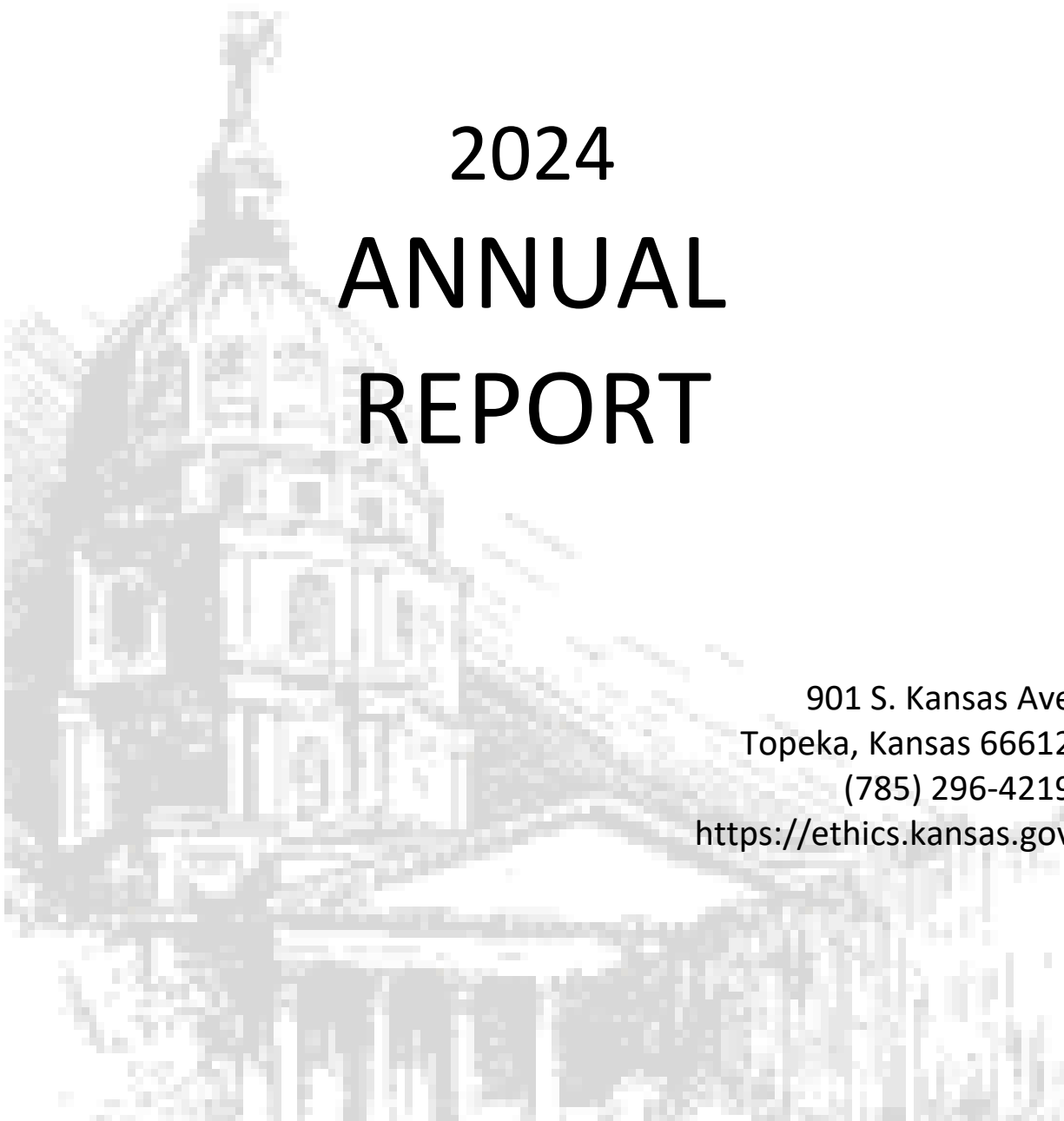
**STATUS OF FILINGS FOR OCTOBER 28, 2024  
RECEIPTS & EXPENDITURES REPORTS**

	<b>Number Required to File</b>	<b>Number of Affidavits</b>	<b>Number of Reports Filed In A Timely Manner</b>	<b>Number of Failure to File Notices Sent</b>
<b>STATE CANDIDATES</b>				
Senate	89	6	80	3
State Representative	235	11	212	12
District Attorney	12	0	11	1
State Board of Education	15	1	14	0
District Judge	53	37	14	2
District Magistrate Judge	49	35	14	0
Retention Judge	82	82	0	0
<b>COUNTY CANDIDATES FOR 2024</b>	<b>1092</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL CANDIDATES</b>	<b>1627</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>PARTY COMMITTEES</b>				
State Party Committees	5	0	4	0
Congressional District Committees	8	0	9	0
Recognized Party Committees	4	0	4	0
Democratic Co. Central Committees	66	10	50	6
Republican Co. Central Committees	99	13	78	8
Libertarian Co. Central Committee	1	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL PARTY COMMITTEES</b>	<b>183</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>POLITICAL COMMITTEES</b>				
General	204	7	176	21
Democratic Women's Clubs	9	0	9	0
Republican Women's Clubs	5	0	4	1
<b>TOTAL POLITICAL COMMITTEES</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>22</b>

GOVERNMENTAL  
ETHICS  
COMMISSION

2024  
ANNUAL  
REPORT

901 S. Kansas Ave  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219  
<https://ethics.kansas.gov>



## **PREFACE**

This annual report is submitted to the Governor and the Legislative Coordinating Council for transmittal to the Legislature pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4119a and K.S.A. 46-1212c. With some exceptions, the report covers the period from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024, the end of Fiscal Year 2024. Occasionally, data for the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2025 is used to provide a more complete picture of the Commission's operations.

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**Mission:**

***The Governmental Ethics Commission works to foster public trust and confidence in state government decision-making through education, administration, and enforcement of the Campaign Finance Act and State Governmental Ethics Laws.***

The Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission was established by the Kansas Legislature in 1974 to administer, interpret, and enforce the Campaign Finance Act (K.S.A. 25-4142 *et seq.*) and laws relating to conflict of interests, financial disclosure, and the regulation of lobbying (K.S.A. 46-215 *et seq.*). These laws establish the public's right to information about the financial affairs of Kansas' public officials, lobbyists, and candidates for state and local office. The Commission also renders advisory opinions and can adopt rules and regulations under a less comprehensive conflict of interest law covering local government officials and employees (K.S.A. 75-4301 *et seq.*).

**Agency Philosophy:**

***The Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission believes the strongest safeguard against unethical conduct by public officials and employees is an informed and active public. For the disclosure elements of the legislation to have meaning, the public must be made aware of the legislation and the financial disclosure information must be accessible to the public. To this end, the Commission and its staff will approach their duties with a dedicated sense of purpose and responsibility to the individuals subject to the Campaign Finance Act and State Governmental Ethics Laws and the citizens of Kansas by performing their activities in an efficient and impartial manner. The Commission places a high priority on providing assistance to those subject to the Commission's jurisdiction to prevent violations.***

## Commission Members

The Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission is a nine member, bipartisan, citizen commission authorized by K.S.A. 25-4119a. Members serve two-year terms with the Commission's Chairperson appointed by the Governor. The Vice-Chairperson is elected by the membership. Commission appointments are made by the Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, President of the Senate, Minority Leader of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader in the House. The Governor makes two appointments, each from a different political party.

The Commission usually meets once a month. The Commission's meetings are open to the public and information prepared by the staff for each meeting is available to the public. During FY 2024, the Commission held 11 meetings. Meetings are scheduled to address a variety of matters including the review of and action on complaints filed, investigations undertaken, late fees assessed, formal opinion discussion, and audits performed. In addition, the Commission issues advisory opinions to answer questions involving interpretation of a particular section of the law, makes policy decisions, amends and adopts new administrative regulations, and handles administrative matters including personnel, budget preparations, and office procedures.

## Commission Staff

The staff of the Commission assumes all responsibility for the daily operations of the agency which include administration, legal, investigation, audit, information technology, and clerical functions. As a service-oriented agency, the staff strives to assist individuals in complying with applicable laws by responding quickly, efficiently, and impartially. Commission staff also works diligently to ensure campaign finance and lobbying data is compiled, entered, and posted on the Internet to be viewed by the citizens of Kansas.

# **Current Commission Members**

**Nick Hale, Chairperson, Democrat, Prairie Village**

Term expires January 31, 2025

**Jerome Hellmer, Vice-Chairperson, Republican, Salina**

Term expires January 31, 2026

**Samuel Klaassen, Unaffiliated, Lawrence**

Term expires January 31, 2025

**John Solbach, Democrat, Lawrence**

Term expires January 31, 2025

**Chris Burger, Republican, Lawrence**

Term expires January 31, 2025

**Andrew Harrison, Democrat, Prairie Village**

Term expires January 31, 2025

**Beau Jackson, Republican, Fairway**

Term expires January 31, 2026

**Earl Glynn, Republican, Olathe**

Term expires January 31, 2026

**Tess Ramirez, Unaffiliated, Topeka**

Term expires January 31, 2026

## Commission Staff

Executive Director – Mark Skoglund  
Commission & Staff Attorney – Kaitlyn Bull-Stewart  
Office Manager – Payge Quintana-Padgett  
State Candidate Report Examiner – Karina Renna  
Local Candidate Report Examiner – Jennifer Schneider  
Lobbyist Coordinator – Jessica White  
PACs/Parties Coordinator – Denise Davis  
Substantial Interests Coordinator/IT Specialist – Roxie Valdivia  
Investigator – Scott Smith

## Budget

In FY 2024, the Commission was appropriated \$529,298 from the State General Fund with an estimated fee fund expenditure of \$284,919. The following chart reflects revenue and expenditures for the fiscal year.

Fiscal Year 2024 Budget	Actual
Revenue:	
State General Fund Utilized	\$524,032
Fee Fund Utilized	\$283,049
Total Revenue Utilized	\$807,081
Expenditures:	
Salaries & Benefits	\$681,537
Contractual Services	\$117,088
Commodities	\$ 3,612
Capital Outlay	\$ 4,844
Total Expenditures	\$807,081

## **Legislative Activity**

The 2024 Legislature did not pass any bills that impacted the Commission or the laws under its jurisdiction.

## **Organization & Operation**

The Commission's efforts focus on full compliance with the Kansas campaign finance, conflict of interests, and lobbying statutes. Each year the Commission receives thousands of financial disclosure reports filed by candidates, political and party committees, public officials, and lobbyists. Staff time is devoted to assuring the accurate and timely disclosure of required financial information about those in state and local government. The processing and evaluation of filed reports and statements and an analysis of the supporting records, where appropriate, are crucial to the Commission's efforts. It is through the initial and comprehensive review of these reports, and the later audit and investigation when necessary, that the Commission can determine compliance with the laws.

The Commission's work encompasses five areas:

- (1) education and public awareness,
- (2) advisory opinions,
- (3) reviews and audits,
- (4) enforcement (including conducting investigations, the filing of complaints, holding public hearings, and assessing civil penalties), and
- (5) general administrative activities.

## **Education & Public Awareness**

The Commission's goal remains to improve communications regarding the reporting requirements of those subject to one or more of the disclosure laws and to increase public awareness with respect to the impact and importance of information contained in the reports filed. The Commission's website has become an efficient instrument for disseminating and distributing Commission information. Information concerning the Commission, the advisory opinions it issues, scanned copies of state level candidate, party committee and political action committee campaign finance reports, campaign finance and lobbying reporting forms, and campaign election and lobbying statistics can be found at <https://ethics.kansas.gov>.

The Commission utilizes informational brochures, the Internet, the news media, and speaking engagements to inform not only those under the Commission's jurisdiction, but also the public about the laws and their meaning. Statistical information is summarized and printed, in addition to being posted on the Commission's website, in the areas of campaign finance and lobbying. However, most time in this area is devoted to informing those directly covered by the laws of their duties and responsibilities. To accomplish this task, the Commission conducts informational seminars, and prepares and distributes handouts, campaign finance handbooks, lobbying handbooks, and conflict of interest laws brochures. In addition, staff fields calls to provide information and advice. In FY 2024 the Commission's staff made 11 presentations. The Commission is actively working towards providing electronic access to training materials in order to reach all individuals subject to the Ethics Commission's jurisdiction.

## **Advisory Opinions**

Advisory opinions are issued by the Commission to clarify the application of the statutes in a particular situation. The Commission can issue these opinions on its own initiative or in response to individual inquiries. If an individual requests an opinion and conducts themselves according to the guidelines in the opinion, they are presumed to be in compliance with the law.

One opinion was issued in FY 2024 in response to an inquiry. Since the Commission was established in 1974 through June 30, 2024, the Commission has issued a total of 1,262 advisory opinions. A synopsis of the advisory opinion issued in FY 2024 can be found at the conclusion of this report.

## **Review & Audit Program**

Complete, accurate and timely disclosure of certain kinds of financial information by candidates, elected officials, state employees, and lobbyists is the key requirement of the Campaign Finance Act and ethics laws. Active review and auditing of reports is essential for the proper administration of the law.

### **CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

In the area of campaign finance, the Commission's procedures include a preliminary review and post-election comprehensive desk review of all receipts and expenditures reports filed. In addition, a certain number of campaigns and committees are selected for field audits.

Candidates, party committees, and political committees filed 1,519 receipts and expenditures reports in FY 2024. All receipts and expenditures reports received a comprehensive desk review.

Additionally, staff processed 551 state candidates, 35 county candidates, 246 first-class city candidates, and 407 party and political action committees. The candidates, their treasurers, and the party and political committee officers all received handbooks, guides, statutes, and other material to assist them in understanding their responsibilities under the Campaign Finance Act.

## **Audits**

Audits of the records of candidates and political action committees are conducted using generally accepted auditing standards and are conducted on a priority basis. Accorded first priority are situations involving formal complaints. The next priority is assigned to situations in which it is necessary to clarify problems identified during the desk reviews. A general investigation may also be authorized at this point.

Finally, a random sample of candidates and committees is audited. If a candidate is selected for a random audit, their opponent is also examined. In FY 2024, there were 9 campaign finance audits conducted.

### **FY 2024 Campaign Finance Statistics**

- Candidates for 2024 State Office - 551
- Carryover State Candidates – 230
- Candidates for 2024 County Office – 35
- Carryover County Candidates - 116
- Candidates for 2023 First Class City Office – 246
- Carryover First Class City Candidates – 78
- Political Action Committees – 223
- Party Committees - 184
- Campaign Finance Reports Filed – 1,519
- Failure to File Notices Issued – 114
- Error and Omission Notifications Issued - 241

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The Kansas conflict of interests statutes provide for (1) the filing of statements of substantial interests; (2) a code of conduct making it illegal for state officials and employees to be involved in certain conflicts; and (3) the issuance of advisory opinions.

The Commission's staff processed and reviewed 6,433 financial disclosure statements filed by state officers, state employees, and elected officials in FY 2024. Throughout the year, staff updates computer databases as appointments are made, officials resign or their terms end, and new positions are created. Financial disclosure forms and instructions are mailed to new appointees and candidates as the Commission receives official notice of their appointment or eligibility. Thereafter, forms and instructions are emailed or mailed on an annual basis to all persons subject to the filing requirements. All financial disclosure statements are public records and may be reviewed during regular business hours in the Secretary of State's office or on the Secretary of State's website. Those required to file Statements of Substantial Interests are elected state officials and candidates for such office, individuals whose appointments are subject to confirmation by the Senate, general counsels for state agencies, and state officers, employees, and members of boards, councils or commissions meeting the definition of a "designee" and so listed by the head of their agency.

### **2024 Statements of Substantial Interests Filings**

- Employees Listed as Designees – 5,639
- Elected Officials – 187
- Appointees Subject to Senate Confirmation – 18
- Board Members Listed as Designees – 313
- General Counsels - 29

The conflict statutes are of fundamental importance to the workings of state government. They draw the line between private interests and the public trust which must be guarded carefully. Efforts to clarify and enforce the line are increasingly important as public concern mounts over abuses of the public trust.

Many state officials and employees are in a position to make or influence decisions which could directly affect their personal interests. The state conflict of interest laws prohibit such activity. To assist these individuals, the Commission issues advisory opinions upon its own initiative and upon the request of any person to whom the relevant law applies.

## REPRESENTATION CASE DISCLOSURE

There were zero Representation Case Disclosure Statements filed in FY 2024. It is possible that individuals required to file such statements have not done so. However, given the structure of the statutory requirements, there is no way of knowing who should file such statements.

## LOBBYING

There are 616 lobbyists registered for calendar year 2024 as of November 15, 2024. This compares with the total of 623 registered lobbyists in calendar year 2023. Of the 616 registered, some are registered on behalf of more than one person or organization. To date, 2,096 organizations or persons have been represented this year. This compares to 1,921 organizations represented by a lobbyist in 2023. The Commission's statistical analysis of the lobbyist employment and expenditures reports filed shows that this year, \$1,330,788 has been spent on lobbying activities through August 2024, and data for September-December is not reported until January 2025. Registered lobbyists are required to file a lobbyist employment and expenditures report six times a year. These reports show expenditures if the lobbyist spent more than \$100 in a reporting period. To date this calendar year, 5,520 Lobbyist Employment and Expenditures Reports have been filed. A lobbyist can file an Affidavit of Exemption from filing the Lobbyist Employment and Expenditures Report if they do not expend in excess of \$100 in any reporting period.

### Lobbyist Registrations and Expenditures

#### To Date for Calendar Year 2024

- Number of Registered Lobbyists – 616
- Number of Lobbyist Registration Statements Filed – 2,096
- Number of Reports Filed by Lobbyists – 5,520
- Total of Expenditures for January-August 2024 – \$1,330,788
- Total Expenditures for 2023: \$902,331
- Number of Failure to File Notices Issued – 92

## **Enforcement**

### **INVESTIGATIONS**

In FY 2024, the Commission addressed 19 investigations, excluding matters that are resolved quickly with letters of warning or caution. Investigations can be conducted prior to a complaint being filed or following the filing of a complaint. Inquiries and investigations remain confidential until a complaint has been filed and a probable cause determination has been made regarding the complaint. Whenever an investigation does not disclose facts sufficient to warrant further action, the Commission may issue a report concerning the findings of the Commission to the person or persons investigated. This report can be made public by the person or persons investigated.

### **COMPLAINTS**

There were 27 complaints filed in FY 2024. Twenty complaints were dismissed on the basis that there was insufficient evidence to support a probable cause determination or were dismissed after being set for hearing. Six complaints had a public hearing. One complaint is ongoing. It should be understood that after an investigation, if the Commission concludes there is no evidence to establish probable cause that there was an intentional violation of law, a complaint is dismissed and no public hearing is held. The determination as to whether an intentional violation has occurred is a decision which is not reached until the conclusion of a public hearing. Anyone who suspects that any of the provisions administered by the Commission have been violated may file a complaint in writing with the Commission.

### **CIVIL PENALTIES & FINES**

The statutes enforced by the Commission provide for the assessment of civil penalties for failure to file certain reports or statements under the campaign finance, lobbying and state conflict of interest statutes. Individuals can be subject to a \$10 per day penalty for each day the report or statement remains unfiled up to a maximum of \$300. Since 2018, for primary and general election campaign finance reports, as well as for lobbyist expenditure reports, the civil penalty is \$100 for the first day and \$50 for each day the report remains unfiled up to a maximum of \$1000. The Commission is authorized to waive any imposed civil penalty upon a finding of good cause. As of January 25, 2024, "good cause" can mean medical circumstances that prevented timely filing, financial hardship, natural disaster or theft making timely filing impossible, or other unique circumstances that did not arise from the filer's delay or

negligence. There were civil penalties totaling \$43,790 assessed and \$4,865 in civil penalties waived in FY 2024. The Commission collected \$30,943.50 in civil penalties. Some civil penalties which were assessed in prior years were collected in FY 2024. Some of the civil penalties assessed in FY 2024 still remain outstanding.

In addition to any other penalty prescribed under the campaign finance, lobbying or state conflict of interest statutes, the Commission can assess a civil fine not to exceed \$5,000 for the first violation, \$10,000 for the second violation and \$15,000 for the third and each subsequent violation. Before a civil fine can be assessed, the person must be given proper notice and an opportunity to be heard. Civil fines in the amount of \$49,000 were assessed in FY 2024 as a result of eight civil fine hearings. Of this amount, \$2,000 was later waived and \$0 has been paid. In FY 2024, a total of \$210.45 has been collected in fines, which includes amounts collected from fines assessed prior to FY 2024.

**FY 2024 Civil Penalties and Fines**

Campaign Finance Civil Penalties Assessed - \$29,290

Lobbying Civil Penalties Assessed – \$14,500

Statement of Substantial Interests Civil Penalties Assessed - \$0

Total Civil Penalties Assessed – \$43,790

Total Civil Penalties Waived – \$4,865

Total Civil Penalties Collected - \$30,943.50

Total Civil Fines Assessed – \$49,000

Total Civil Fines Waived - \$2,000

Total Civil Fines Collected - \$210.45

## Commission Recommendations

The Commission is directed by statute to make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. It recognizes that any major piece of legislation periodically needs revision, modification, and in some cases, major changes. To that end, the Commission makes the following recommendations.

Due to litigation regarding certain aspects of the Kansas Campaign Finance Act, the Commission is not taking a formal position regarding some potential legislative changes. This statement and the accompanying legislative recommendations should not be read to imply generalized support of or opposition to potential legislative changes not included within these recommendations.

### **1. Electronic Filing for State Candidates**

K.S.A. 25-4148 permits state and local candidates, other than for statewide office, to file their campaign finance reports on paper or electronically. Candidates for statewide office must file all forms electronically. Requiring electronic campaign finance reporting would provide a wide variety of benefits, including but not limited to:

- Cost and efficiency savings regarding data entry reductions and more rapid report processing,
- Cost savings from decreased numbers of Error and Omission Notices sent due to errors that could be prevented by filling fields in an electronic form such as calculation errors and required fields being left blank,
- Decreased costs for printing forms and reports,
- Increased accuracy of data presented to the public as it would reduce avenues for errors, and
- Increased transparency and decreased time delay in presenting campaign finance data to the public.

Due to these benefits and others, the Commission believes that significant benefits warrant requiring electronic submission of all campaign finance reports for state office. In doing so, Kansas would be joining 43 states that already have this requirement.

The Commission supports the granting of exemptions for good cause at the discretion of the Executive Director. Furthermore, the Commission does not oppose a delayed initiation date of the requirement until the next election cycle if needed.

## 2. Ethics Cleanup Megabill

There are many statutes that require minor corrections due to statutory conflicts created elsewhere, language that overlooks practice, references to statutes that no longer exist, and extraneous language that was intended to be removed in other legislation. The Ethics Commission proposes that each of these items are included in one bill since these changes are expected to be noncontroversial but nonetheless important to cleaning up ethics and campaign finance statutes.

- A. **Require email addresses – K.S.A. 25-4144 and 4145** indicate that email addresses are optional for treasurers and PAC chairs. There is little reason to allow for emails to be optional in 2025, and another avenue for contacting people is often necessary. Some individuals do not reliably respond to attempts to reach them through mail or phone.
  
- B. **Extraneous text – 25-4148** includes extra language that was left over after an earlier legislative adjustment. The language “in both” should be stricken from the sentence: “Reports filed by treasurers for state office, other than officers elected on a state-wide basis, shall be filed in both with the office of the secretary of state.”
  
- C. **Correcting “paid for” attribution for social media – K.S.A. 25-4156(b)(1)(E)** defines corrupt political advertising as any person making (or causing to be made) any website, e-mail, or other type of internet communication which expressly advocates the nomination, election, or defeat of a clearly identified candidate for a state or local office to follow such matter with a statement which states: "Paid for" or "Sponsored by" followed by the name of the chairperson or treasurer of the political or other organization sponsoring the same or the name of the individual who is responsible therefor. Appending such attributions to e-mails is analogous to printed matter and compliance with the attribution requirement is simple and straightforward. Compliance for some websites and some social media websites can be difficult or impossible.

The Commission believes that the rigid formats of certain websites or other internet communications make appending the required attributions problematic or impossible. The Commission believes the Legislature should consider methods to require clear and conspicuous attribution on social media platforms.

- D. Adding clarity to affidavits of exemption – K.S.A. 25-4173** allows candidates to not file campaign finance reports if they do not raise or expend more than \$1,000. This statute would be well served with clarity regarding when such an affidavit can be accepted and the time period it covers. An affidavit should only be accepted in the calendar year in which the election occurs and it should only extend through the calendar year of the election cycle. This clarification would ensure that affidavits properly cover the reports for the primary election, general election, and end-of-year January report, but it would not extend into perpetuity.
- E. Statutory conflict – K.S.A. 25-4173 and 25-4174** allow candidates to file an affidavit if they expend and receive less than a certain amount in each of the primary and general election cycles. This threshold amount was increased to \$1,000 in 2015, but the adjoining statute was not updated. Therefore, K.S.A. 25-4174 should have the text reflect the correct affidavit amount of \$1,000.
- F. Extraneous text – K.S.A. 46-255** includes the sentence “No complaint alleging a violation of section 31 may be filed with the commission after the expiration of thirty (30) days from the date upon which the alleged violation occurred.” The statute being referenced was repealed; this sentence can be removed.
- G. Procedural unintended consequence – K.S.A. 46-256** requires that when the Commission finds probable cause to believe the allegations in a complaint, a hearing shall be fixed within 30 days. In practice, this requirement is not always possible. The Commission typically meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Many times, the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Commission is greater than 30 days away. Additionally, some meetings are canceled due to weather, light agendas, or other issues. The Commission recommends removing the 30 day requirement as the Legislature passed in 2023 for the Campaign Finance Act.
- H. Statutory conflict – K.S.A. 46-265** allows lobbyists to register on paper, though since 2018 all reports must be completed electronically per K.S.A. 46-268. This creates an unnecessary procedural issue.

- I. **Statutory conflict – K.S.A. 46-280** provides that the Commission shall send a notice to any lobbyist who has not timely filed a report and any individual who has not timely filed a Statement of Substantial Interest form. The statute, as amended by 2018 HB 2642, increased the civil penalties for lobbyist expenditure reports and shortened the applicable grace period to file the form without penalty. The amended statute creates a potential conflict in the notice provision regarding whether the grace period begins from receipt of the notice or from the sending of the notice. Since lobbyists and individuals subject to filing Statements of Substantial Interest are aware of the relevant deadlines and in order to create consistency with similar statutory provisions in other areas, the Commission recommends a procedural amendment so that the grace period provided in statute begins running from the time the Commission sends the notice of failure to file, rather than from the time of receipt.

### **3. Support of Federal Candidates**

Currently, Kansas campaign finance law strictly prohibits using any funds to benefit a federal candidate:

*Any political funds which have been collected and were subject to the reporting requirements of the campaign finance act shall not be used in or for the campaign of a candidate for a federal elective office.*

K.S.A. 25-4153(f). The Commission does not see an anticorruption benefit to prohibiting state party committees, county party committees, and PACs from engaging in this sort of activity. As such, the Commission recommends repealing this subsection. Candidates are already prohibited from spending their funds to benefit other candidates per K.S.A. 25-4157a, which would otherwise be the only reason to preserve this subsection.

#### **4. Required Campaign Account Termination**

A candidate can keep a campaign account open long after being a candidate or officeholder. Nothing in the Campaign Finance Act currently requires the candidate to ever close the account. The candidate continues to file annual January receipts and expenditures reports. As of last year in Kansas, there are campaign accounts open that are well over 30 years old. Over 40 accounts have been inactive for 10 years or more.

Allowing these accounts to remain open perpetually creates issues. Primarily, this creates an auditing nightmare. Candidates who try to terminate with a balance discrepancy have no ability to reasonably track the source of the discrepancy because banks often do not have reliable records from several years ago. Additionally, not requiring the closure of these accounts opens many unchecked avenues to illegally use one's campaign account for personal benefit, since there would be little oversight over unreported distributions of funds.

Accounts open for this long also pose major issues with contacting the account holder. These account holders do not typically update their appointment of treasurer forms, substantially increasing the difficulty in assisting them with account or filing issues.

This recommendation would require inactive campaign accounts to be zeroed out and closed within 6 years after the end of the candidate's most recent term of office or the date of the election in which they last filed as a candidate. Six years is intentionally generous but ensures that these accounts cannot remain open unchecked in perpetuity.

Missouri requires closure of accounts within 30 days. Oklahoma requires closure of accounts within 2 years if the office has a 2-year term, 4 years if the office has a 4-year term, and 6 years if the office has a 6-year term

#### **5. Make PACs and party committees responsible for report filing**

Both candidates and treasurers are legally responsible for ensuring their report is filed properly and timely. Due likely to a drafting oversight, only treasurers are responsible for the proper and timely filing of PAC and party reports. This creates innumerable problematic situations that limit the ability of the Ethics Commission to provide the transparency to Kansans that is required by law. This statutory correction would be rather simple and would apply the same language to PACs and party committees that apply to candidates, ensuring that the chairperson would be responsible for report filing.

**Appendix I**

**SUMMARY  
OF  
ADVISORY OPINION  
ISSUED IN  
FY 2024**

**Opinion No. 2024-01 – Issued May 22, 2024 [Campaign Finance]**

Campaign contributions processed by a third-party payment processor must be attributed to the person who made such contributions and any processing fees associated with such contribution must be reported as expenditures on any relevant campaign finance reports.

## Appendix II

# **STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF LOBBYING EXPENDITURES 2014-2024**

## Statistical Comparison of Lobbying Expenditures 2014-24

Year	Number of Lobbyists/Registrations		Food and Beverage	Recreation	Entertainment Gifts and Honoraria	Mass Media	Communications	Other	Total
<b>2014</b>	548	1585	\$523,393	\$15,813	\$24,495	\$507,340	\$104,323	\$12,037	\$1,187,401
<b>2015</b>	557	1672	\$570,815	\$14,926	\$21,532	\$609,551	\$505,443	\$23,242	\$1,745,509
<b>2016</b>	552	1491	\$456,850	\$9,271	\$9,491	\$144,365	\$370,759	\$3,074	\$993,810
<b>2017</b>	556	1520	\$564,296	\$8,360	\$20,367	\$134,048	\$766,018	\$13,110	\$1,506,199
<b>2018</b>	538	1478	\$527,483	\$6,993	\$7,553	\$76,192	\$309,068	\$13,781	\$941,071
<b>2019</b>	560	1543	\$500,852	\$4,470	\$8,775	\$126,785	\$664,674	\$18,941	\$1,324,497
<b>2020</b>	558	1650	\$384,523	\$3,461	\$19,376	\$28,377	\$344,664	\$14,066	\$794,467
<b>2021</b>	581	1800	\$250,858	\$9,047	\$20,375	\$13,302	\$152,915	\$2,330	\$448,827
<b>2022</b>	598	1892	\$397,390	\$6,087	\$10,919	\$78,424	\$56,329	\$5,858	\$555,007
<b>2023</b>	623	1921	\$593,053	\$11,235	\$22,594	\$41,175	\$221,890	\$12,384	\$902,331
<b>2024 YTD</b>	616	2096	\$592,881	\$6,780	\$16,895	\$220,076	\$481,756	\$12,400	\$1,330,788



## GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

<https://ethics.kansas.gov>

### Procedural Regulation Subcommittee Meeting Update

The procedural regulation subcommittee met with staff on November 8, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

The subcommittee discussed general goals and deadlines, including future meetings.

The subcommittee agreed to allow 90 days from the date of the meeting to allow for public and staff suggestions. This public suggestion period is in addition to the public comment period required by K.S.A. 77-401 *et seq.* This 90-day period expires on February 6, 2025.

The next meeting of the subcommittee is scheduled for Friday, December 13, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

**GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION**<https://ethics.kansas.gov>

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Mark Skoglund, Executive Director

DATE: November 20, 2024

RE: Candidate and Treasurer Civil Penalties

The following individuals failed to file reports by the due date for penalty free filing. K.S.A. 25-4152 provides that a certified notice shall be sent, and that the individual shall have 15 days from the date of such notice to file the report. After that date, the civil penalty is \$10 per day up to a maximum of \$300. The following individuals did not file in a timely manner:

Name	Date Filed	Days Late	Amount
<b>Amended July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report</b>			
Mark Locke			
Candidate for Sheriff	10/31/2024	5	\$50
George Miller, Treasurer			
Candidate for Sheriff	10/31/2024	5	\$50

The following individuals failed to file reports by the due date for penalty free filing. K.S.A. 25-4152 provides that a certified notice shall be sent, and that the individual shall have 2 days from the date of such notice to file the report. After that date, the civil penalty is \$100 for the first day and \$50 per day up to a maximum of \$1,000. The following individuals did not file in a timely manner:

Name	Date Filed	Days Late	Amount
<b>October 28, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report</b>			
Donald Anderson			
Candidate for District Judge	11/6/2024	4	\$250
Christina Haswood			
Candidate for State Senate	11/14/2024	13	\$700
Zachary Hawkins			
Candidate for State Representative	11/4/2024	2	\$150

Angela Hecke			
Candidate for District Judge	11/5/2024	3	\$200
Joshua Jones			
Candidate for State Representative	11/2/2024	1	\$100
James Leis			
Candidate for Sheriff	11/5/2024	2	\$150
Tom Moody			
Candidate for County Commissioner	11/5/2024	2	\$150
Greg Riat			
Candidate for County Commissioner	11/8/2024	5	\$300
Ephren Taylor			
Candidate for State Senate	11/14/2024	13	\$700



**GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION**

<https://ethics.kansas.gov>

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Mark Skoglund, Executive Director

DATE: November 20, 2024

RE: Political Action Committee and Party Committee Treasurer Civil Penalties

The following individuals failed to file reports by the due date for penalty free filing. K.S.A. 25-4152 provides that a certified notice shall be sent, and that the individual shall have 2 days from the date of such notice to file the report. After that date, the civil penalty is \$100 for the first day and \$50 per day up to a maximum of \$1,000. The following individuals did not file in a timely manner:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Filed</u>	<u>Days Late</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<b>October 28, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report</b>			
Steven Watson, Treasurer Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 441 PAC	11/13/2024	6	\$350
Jonathon Westbrook, Treasurer Kansas Black Republican Council	11/8/2024	1	\$100

## KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION WAIVER REQUEST FORM

### Instructions

To be considered for a waiver request, this form and supplemental documentation must be completed and submitted within thirty (30) days of the assessment order pursuant to K.A.R. 19-4a-1. THIS FORM IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT AND WILL BE INCLUDED IN PUBLIC MEETING MATERIALS. ANY PERSONAL IDENTIFYING INFORMATION WILL BE REDACTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT REQUIRED BY LAW, PURSUANT TO K.S.A. 45-215 THROUGH K.S.A. 45-223. The intentional filing of false information on this form is a class A misdemeanor.

RECEIVED

OCT 22 2024

KS Governmental Ethics Commission

**NOTE:** The following reasons ARE NOT sufficient:

- No activity during the reporting period.
- Previous compliance or being a first-time filer.
- No longer with the committee, campaign, or organization.
- Loss of primary or withdrawal of candidacy.

Name <b>Taiasha Nichols</b>	Position <b>Treasurer</b>
Associated Organization, Office Sought, or Lobbying Client(s) <b>Treasurer for Unified Government</b>	

**Please select the appropriate form or report.**

- Appointment of Treasurer (Candidate or Candidate Committee)
- Statement of Organization (Political Action or Party Committee)
- Receipts & Expenditures Report (Candidate or Committee)
- Employment & Expenditures Report (Lobbyist)
- Registration (Political Action Committee or Lobbyist)
- Statement of Substantial Interests (Public Officials)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
Report Due <i>See attached</i>
Failure to File Notice Sent <i>see attached</i>
Report Received <i>see attached</i>
Date Assessed <i>see attached</i>
Amount Assessed <i>see attached</i>

**Please select all that apply and provide an accompanying explanation in the space provided.**

Categories of Good Cause	Supplemental Documentation Examples
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Medical Circumstances</u> of a person essential to filing or their immediate family member that caused the delay in filing.	Doctor's statement with date(s), hospital bills, police incident report, death certificate/obituary, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Financial Hardship</u> - the assessed civil penalty creates an undue financial burden.	The financial hardship declaration <u>must</u> be completed.
<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Natural Disaster or Theft</u> making timely filing impossible due to the unavailability of records.	Police incident, fire, or insurance report(s) with dates provided and the details of the loss or damage.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>Other Unique Circumstances</u> not previously mentioned that did not arise from the filer's delay or negligence.	Any documentation that will substantiate the reason as to why the filing was delayed.

Additional Explanation

I am requesting a waiver of assessments and penalties from the Melvin Williams campaign for UG County commissioner. Melvin had asked me to be his treasurer but stated that he would be funding his own campaign and not receiving any donations. We did not set up a bank account, he would only give me his receipts, I would type up the report and send it in. In late October or early November...Melvin stated that he had received a donation from someone in the form of a check and he deposited it into his own account. I told him that was incorrect and we needed to open a commissioner account. I called multiple times to set up the account to no avail. I told Melvin that I could no longer be his treasurer. I started receiving letters for the Jan report. I asked him for the information to submit the last report and then Melvin stopped answering my phone calls and I could not reach him.

I called into the Ethics office and told them that Melvin would not give me the information and there was nothing that I could do.

This was Melvin's first time running for office and my first appointment as treasurer. I was ignorant to what could be done so I reached out to an Attorney Cline Boone which had called the KGEC. I thought it was resolved for some reason but, It looks as if the letters were still going to my old address and then I get back from out of town and have letters at my new address. I am desperately trying to take care of this and I am pleading with you to remove all penalties and assesments for Taiasha.

I swear, or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing information is true and correct. Further, I understand that some or all of the information included on and with this declaration may be made publicly available under the Kansas Open Records Act (K.S.A. 45-215 through K.S.A. 45-223).

Executed in Wyandotte County, State of Kansas, on the 22nd day of October, 2024.

*TAIASHA BISHOP/LENOCH/LS*  
 dotloop verified  
 10/22/24 12:00 PM CDT  
 LOV2-HVQY-EDOU-KJCG

Signature

**Submitting the Form**

This form and related documents may be emailed to KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov or mailed/delivered to:

Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
 901 S. Kansas Ave.  
 Topeka, KS 66612

**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

[Large empty rectangular box for office use only]

Below is the data for the three civil penalties assessed against Ms. Nichols:

Report Due	January 10, 2022
Failure to File Notice Sent	January 24, 2022
Report Received	October 1, 2024
Date Assessed	March 24, 2022
Amount Assessed	\$300.00

Report Due	January 10, 2023
Failure to File Notice Sent	January 27, 2023
Report Received	October 1, 2024
Date Assessed	March 23, 2023
Amount Assessed	\$300.00

Report Due	January 10, 2024
Failure to File Notice Sent	February 22, 2024
Report Received	October 1, 2024
Date Assessed	April 19, 2024
Amount Assessed	\$300.00

Ms. Nichols also had a \$5,000.00 fine imposed on June 3, 2022, in Complaint No. 727. As a condition of the Commission's Report and Order, the \$5,000.00 fine could have been reduced to \$1,000.00 if the outstanding report were to be submitted within thirty (30) days of the date of the order.

The Director does not recommend this waiver.

#### Fine Assessment

The Commission cannot waive a civil fine without a motion to reconsider the hearing, which must be filed within a timeframe that has long expired. Thus, this waiver request can only consider the \$900 in civil penalties that she has been assessed, not the \$5,000 that she was assessed in May 2022 for nonfiling of the January 2022 report.

#### Out of Time

The request for waiver is out of time. The civil penalties at issue were assessed in March 2022, March 2023, and April 2024. The Commission guidance document for civil penalty waivers is clear that she has 30 days to request a waiver, and this time may only be extended upon a showing of circumstances outside the control of the requestor.

In July 2022, our staff attorney Brett Berry had a phone call with Cline Boone, an attorney, about her complaint and resulting fine assessment (not the civil penalties). In this call Mr. Berry indicated she could request a rehearing but she was out of time and offered a payment plan. Mr. Boone represented to Mr. Berry on that call that Ms. Nichols was aware that she needed to update her address. Mr. Boone said he would talk to her. She did not update her address nor did Mr. Berry give any indication that “it was resolved” as she indicated in her request. Also, this call occurred prior to two of the civil penalty assessments.

#### Did Not Resign

At any time, she could have resigned in writing with our office and did not do so. This would have relieved her of any obligations and liabilities from that point forward.

#### Attempts to Contact

Our staff reached out in many different ways to attempt to resolve these issues over the last three years. We sent extra reminders, left at least one phone message, and attempted other addresses. She even had an entire complaint process with delivered certified mail for which she never responded and was fined in default. Nothing resulted in the reports being filed until she received a collections letter in October 2024.

#### Conclusion

I understand that treasurers often have difficulty working with their candidates and am frequently sympathetic to the issues they encounter. However, in this matter, there were many opportunities to resolve these issues, either by filing the reports, contacting us, resigning with us in writing, or responding in any way.

BEFORE THE KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

(Commission Use Only)

MARK SKOGLUND, Executive Director, )  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, )  
Complainant. )

vs. )

Complaint No. 788

PATRICK SCHMIDT, Candidate for )  
State Senate, )  
Respondent. )

COMPLAINT

**A. Complainant:** Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219

**B. Respondent:** Patrick Schmidt, Candidate  
State Senate  
PO Box 750783  
Topeka, Kansas 66675  
(785) 317-8032

**C. Complainant alleges:**

**Facts Common to Both Counts**

1. Patrick Schmidt was a candidate for State Senate in the 2024 election cycle.
2. On or about May 7, 2024, it was reported to the Commission that neither Mr. Schmidt's website nor newsletter contained the requisite paid-for attribution, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4156.
3. On May 9, 2024, Complainant sent a letter to Mr. Schmidt informing him that the paid-for attribution was required for all internet communications, telephonic communications, mailed communications, and other media communications that expressly advocated for the nomination, election, or defeat of a clearly identified candidate for a state or local office.

4. The May 9, 2024, letter further stated that omitting the required disclaimer is a class C misdemeanor that can result in fines up to \$5,000.00 per offense.
5. The letter further informed Mr. Schmidt that the Commission is generally understanding of first-time disclaimer mistakes; therefore, Complainant indicated that no complaint would be filed for the May 7, 2024, paid-for violation.

**Count 1 - July 22, 2024, Mailer**

6. Complainant re-alleges the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 5 and incorporates the same herein by reference.
7. On or about July 22, 2024, it was reported to the Commission that the Schmidt Campaign had sent out another mailer expressly advocating for his election as a clearly identified candidate for a state or local office, but the mailer lacked the paid-for attribution required by K.S.A. 25-4156.
8. Notwithstanding the May 9, 2024, letter informing him of the disclaimer requirements under K.S.A. 25-4156, Mr. Schmidt failed to include the appropriate paid-for attribution.

**Count 2 - July 30, 2024, Mailer**

9. Complainant re-alleges the allegations set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 8 and incorporates the same herein by reference.
10. On or about July 30, 2024, it was reported to the Commission that the Schmidt Campaign had sent out a different mailer expressly advocating for his election as a clearly identified candidate for a state or local office, but the mailer lacked the paid-for attribution required by K.S.A. 25-4156.
11. Notwithstanding the May 9, 2024, letter informing him of the disclaimer requirements under K.S.A. 25-4156, Mr. Schmidt failed to include the appropriate paid-for attribution.

**WHEREFORE**, Complainant respectfully requests the Commission find Respondent, Patrick Schmidt, liable under the Kansas Campaign Finance Act for failing to include the required disclaimer in materials that expressly advocate for the nomination, election, or defeat of a candidate for state or local office, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4156 and K.A.R. 19-20-4. Further, Complainant requests the Commission impose a fine pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4181, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the first violation, \$10,000.00 for the second violation, or \$15,000.00 for the third violation and each subsequent violation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

PREPARED BY:

**/s/ Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart**

Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart, #28892

General Counsel

Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission

901 S. Kansas Ave.

Topeka, Kansas 66612

(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2548 (fax)

Kaitlyn.Bull-Stewart@ks.gov

**D. Verification:**

State of Kansas )  
 ) ss  
County of Shawnee )

Mark Skoglund, being first duly sworn, upon oath states:

I am the Complainant above-named; I have read the Complaint; I know the contents thereof, and all the statements made therein are true

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

Subscribed and sworn (affirmed) to before me this 23rd day of August 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My appointment expires: August 30, 2027

(Seal)



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that on the 20th day of August 2024, the foregoing Complaint was deposited in the U.S. mail, certified, postage prepaid, return receipt requested **and** U.S. mail, first-class postage prepaid, addressed to the following:

Patrick Schmidt  
PO Box 750783  
Topeka, KS 66675



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Payge E. Quintana-Padgett  
Office Manager  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2648 (fax)  
KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov

BEFORE THE KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

(Commission Use Only)

MARK SKOGLUND, Executive Director, )  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, )  
Complainant. )

vs. )

Complaint No. 784

JOSHUA BARGDILL, Treasurer, )  
Harvey County Treasurer, )  
Respondent. )

COMPLAINT

**A. Complainant:** Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219

**B. Respondent:** Joshua Bargdill, Treasurer  
Harvey County Treasurer  
403 E 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Newton, KS 67114  
(316) 650-3106

**C. Complainant alleges:** Failure to File July 2024 Report

1. Joshua Bargdill was the Treasurer for Mark Llamas, a candidate for Harvey County Treasurer, in the 2024 election cycle. Mr. Bargdill was required to file a Receipts and Expenditures Report for the applicable time periods under K.S.A. 25-4148(a); however, despite being responsible for filing such report under K.S.A. 25-4152(a), no such report was filed.
2. On August 1, 2024, the Commission sent notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, to Mr. Bargdill notifying him of the requirement to file a July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report (“July 2024 Report”).

3. The notice further states that the failure to file the July 2024 Report may be punishable as a class A misdemeanor.
4. Finally, the notice stated that Mr. Bargdill had until August 16, 2024, to file the July 2024 Report to comply with the reporting requirements to avoid a civil penalty being assessed against him.
5. Notwithstanding the notice of the filing requirement under K.S.A. 25-4148, Mr. Bargdill failed to file the July 2024 Report.

**WHEREFORE**, Complainant respectfully requests the Commission find Respondent, Joshua Bargdill, liable under the Kansas Campaign Finance Act for failing to file the July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4148(a)(1). Further, Complainant requests the Commission impose a fine pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4181, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the first violation, \$10,000.00 for the second violation, and \$15,000.00 for the third violation and each subsequent violation.



---

**Signature of complainant**

PREPARED BY:

**/s/ Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart**  
Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart, #28892  
General Counsel  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2548 (fax)  
Kaitlyn.Bull-Stewart@ks.gov



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that on the 26th day of August 2024, the foregoing Complaint was deposited in the U.S. mail, certified, postage prepaid, return receipt requested **and** U.S. mail, first-class postage prepaid, addressed to the following:

Joshua Bargdill  
403 E 10<sup>th</sup> St.  
Newton, KS 67114



Payge E. Quintana-Padgett  
Office Manager  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2648 (fax)  
KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov

BEFORE THE KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

(Commission Use Only)

MARK SKOGLUND, Executive Director, )  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, )  
Complainant. )  
)  
vs. )  
)  
CHRISTOPHER PARISHO, Candidate, )  
State Representative, )  
Respondent. )  
)

Complaint No. 786

COMPLAINT

**A. Complainant:** Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219

**B. Respondent:** Christopher Parisho, Candidate  
State Representative  
311 S Exposition Ave.  
Wichita, KS 67213  
(316) 806-2198

**C. Complainant alleges:** Failure to File July 2024 Report

1. Christopher Parisho was a candidate for State Representative in the 2024 election cycle. Mr. Parisho was required to file a Receipts and Expenditures Report for the applicable time periods under K.S.A. 25-4148(a); however, no such report was filed by the deadline.
2. On July 30, 2024, the Commission sent notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, to Mr. Parisho notifying him of the requirement to file a July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report (“July 2024 Report”).
3. The notice further states that the failure to file the July 2024 Report may be punishable as a class A misdemeanor.

4. Finally, the notice stated that Mr. Parisho had until August 1, 2024, to file the July 2024 Report to comply with the reporting requirements to avoid a civil penalty being assessed against him
5. Notwithstanding the notice of the filing requirement under K.S.A. 25-4148, Mr. Parisho failed to file the July 2024 Report by the deadline.

**WHEREFORE**, Complainant respectfully requests the Commission find Respondent, Christopher Parisho, liable under the Kansas Campaign Finance Act for failing to file the July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4148(a)(1). Further, Complainant requests the Commission impose a fine pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4181, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the first violation, \$10,000.00 for the second violation, and \$15,000.00 for the third violation and each subsequent violation.



---

**Signature of complainant**

PREPARED BY:

**/s/ Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart**  
Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart, #28892  
General Counsel  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2548 (fax)  
Kaitlyn.Bull-Stewart@ks.gov

**D. Verification:**

State of Kansas )  
 ) ss  
County of Shawnee )

Mark Skoglund, being first duly sworn, upon oath states:

I am the Complainant above-named; I have read the Complaint; I know the contents thereof, and all the statements made therein are true

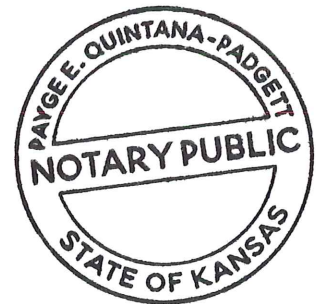
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

Subscribed and sworn (affirmed) to before me this 23rd day of August 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My appointment expires: August 30, 2027

(Seal)



CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

This is to certify that on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of August 2024, the foregoing Complaint was deposited in the U.S. mail, certified, postage prepaid, return receipt requested **and** U.S. mail, first-class postage prepaid, addressed to the following:

Christopher Parisho  
311 S. Exposition Ave.  
Wichita, KS 67213



Payge E. Quintana-Padgett  
Office Manager  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2648 (fax)  
KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov

BEFORE THE KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

(Commission Use Only)

MARK SKOGLUND, Executive Director, )  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, )  
Complainant. )

vs. )

Complaint No. 787

MELISSA STOUT, Treasurer, )  
State Representative, )  
Respondent. )

COMPLAINT

**A. Complainant:** Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219


**B. Respondent:** Melissa Stout, Treasurer  
State Representative  
2101 W. MacArthur Rd, #314  
Wichita, KS 67217  
(316) 312-5508

**C. Complainant alleges:** Failure to File July 2024 Report

1. Melissa Stout was the Treasurer for Christopher Parisho, a candidate for State Representative, in the 2024 election cycle. Ms. Stout was required to file a Receipts and Expenditures Report for the applicable time periods under K.S.A. 25-4148(a); however, despite being responsible for filing such report under K.S.A. 25-4152(a), no such report was filed by the deadline.
2. On July 30, 2024, the Commission sent notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, to Ms. Stout notifying her of the requirement to file a July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report (“July 2024 Report”).

3. The notice further states that the failure to file the July 2024 Report may be punishable as a class A misdemeanor.
4. Finally, the notice stated that Ms. Stout had until August 14, 2024, to file the July 2024 Report to comply with the reporting requirements to avoid a civil penalty being assessed against her.
5. Notwithstanding the notice of the filing requirement under K.S.A. 25-4148, Ms. Stout failed to file the July 2024 Report by the deadline.

**WHEREFORE**, Complainant respectfully requests the Commission find Respondent, Melissa Stout, liable under the Kansas Campaign Finance Act for failing to file the July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4148(a)(1). Further, Complainant requests the Commission impose a fine pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4181, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the first violation, \$10,000.00 for the second violation, and \$15,000.00 for the third violation and each subsequent violation.



---

**Signature of complainant**

PREPARED BY:

**/s/ Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart**  
Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart, #28892  
General Counsel  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2548 (fax)  
Kaitlyn.Bull-Stewart@ks.gov

**D. Verification:**

State of Kansas )  
 ) ss  
County of Shawnee )

Mark Skoglund, being first duly sworn, upon oath states:

I am the Complainant above-named; I have read the Complaint; I know the contents thereof, and all the statements made therein are true

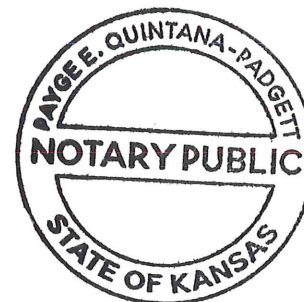
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

Subscribed and sworn (affirmed) to before me this 23rd day of August 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My appointment expires: August 30, 2027

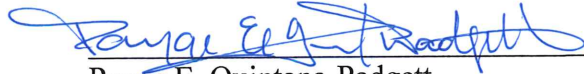
(Seal)



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that on the 26th day of August 2024, the foregoing Complaint was deposited in the U.S. mail, certified, postage prepaid, return receipt requested **and** U.S. mail, first-class postage prepaid, addressed to the following:

Melissa Stout  
2101 W. MacArthur Rd, #314  
Wichita, KS 67217



---

Payge E. Quintana-Padgett  
Office Manager  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2648 (fax)  
KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov

BEFORE THE KANSAS GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION

(Commission Use Only)

MARK SKOGLUND, Executive Director, )  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission, )  
Complainant. )  
)  
vs. )  
)  
MARK LLAMAS, Candidate, )  
Harvey County Treasurer, )  
Respondent. )  
)

Complaint No. 785

COMPLAINT

A. Complainant: Mark Skoglund, Executive Director  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219

B. Respondent: Mark Llamas, Candidate  
Harvey County Treasurer  
1016 E 9th  
Newton, KS 67114  
(316) 390-2806

C. Complainant alleges: Failure to File July 2024 Report

1. Mark Llamas was a candidate for Harvey County Treasurer in the 2024 election cycle. Mr. Llamas was required to file a Receipts and Expenditures Report for the applicable time periods under K.S.A. 25-4148(a); however, no such report was filed.
2. On August 1, 2024, the Commission sent notice via certified mail, return receipt requested, to Mr. Llamas notifying him of the requirement to file a July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report (“July 2024 Report”).
3. The notice further states that the failure to file the July 2024 Report may be punishable as a class A misdemeanor.

4. Finally, the notice stated that Mr. Llamas had until August 3, 2024, to file the July 2024 Report to comply with the reporting requirements to avoid a civil penalty being assessed against him
5. Notwithstanding the notice of the filing requirement under K.S.A. 25-4148, Mr. Llamas failed to file July 2024 Report.

**WHEREFORE**, Complainant respectfully requests the Commission find Respondent, Mark Llamas, liable under the Kansas Campaign Finance Act for failing to file the July 29, 2024, Receipts and Expenditures Report, pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4148(a)(1). Further, Complainant requests the Commission impose a fine pursuant to K.S.A. 25-4181, in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 for the first violation, \$10,000.00 for the second violation, and \$15,000.00 for the third violation and each subsequent violation.



---

**Signature of complainant**

PREPARED BY:

**/s/ Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart**  
Kaitlyn R. Bull-Stewart, #28892  
General Counsel  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Ave.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2548 (fax)  
Kaitlyn.Bull-Stewart@ks.gov

**D. Verification:**

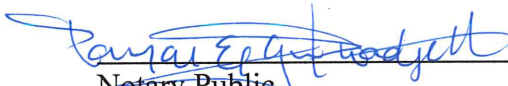
State of Kansas )  
 ) ss  
County of Shawnee )

Mark Skoglund, being first duly sworn, upon oath states:

I am the Complainant above-named; I have read the Complaint; I know the contents thereof, and all the statements made therein are true

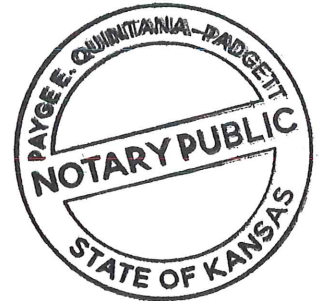
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of complainant

Subscribed and sworn (affirmed) to before me this 23rd day of August 2024.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My appointment expires: August 30, 2027

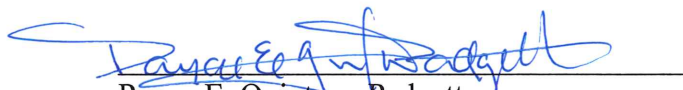
(Seal)



**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

This is to certify that on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of August 2024, the foregoing Complaint was deposited in the U.S. mail, certified, postage prepaid, return receipt requested **and** U.S. mail, first-class postage prepaid, addressed to the following:

Mark Llamas  
1016 E 9<sup>th</sup>  
Newton, KS 67114



Payge E. Quintana-Padgett  
Office Manager  
Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission  
901 S. Kansas Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66612  
(785) 296-4219; (785) 296-2648 (fax)  
KGEC\_Ethics@ks.gov