

BEFORE THE
MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

Filed
OCT 14 2016
Missouri Ethics
Commission

MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION,)
)
Petitioner,)
) Case No. 16-0042-1
v.)
)
CHRISTOPHER COTTONGIM,)
)
Respondent.)

**JOINT STIPULATION OF FACTS, WAIVER OF HEARING
BEFORE THE MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION, AND
CONSENT ORDER WITH JOINT PROPOSED
FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

The undersigned parties jointly stipulate to the facts and consent to the action set forth below.

The undersigned Respondent, Cottongim, acknowledges that he has received and reviewed a copy of the Complaint filed by the Petitioner in this case, and the parties submit to the jurisdiction of the Missouri Ethics Commission.

The undersigned Respondent further acknowledges that he is aware of the various rights and privileges afforded by law, including but not limited to: the right to appear and be represented by counsel; the right to have all allegations against Respondent be proven upon the record by competent and substantial evidence; the right to cross-examine any witnesses appearing at the hearing against Respondent; the right to present evidence on Respondent's behalf at the hearing; and the right to a decision upon the record of the hearing. Being aware of these rights provided to Respondent by operation of law, the undersigned Respondent knowingly and voluntarily waives each and every one of these rights and freely enters into this Joint Stipulation of Facts, Waiver of

Hearing before the Missouri Ethics Commission, and Consent Order with Joint Proposed Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, and agrees to abide by the terms of this document.

I.

Based upon the foregoing, the Petitioner and the undersigned Respondent jointly stipulate to the following and request that the Missouri Ethics Commission adopt as its own the Joint Proposed Findings of Fact and the Joint Proposed Conclusions of Law, as follows:

JOINT PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Missouri Ethics Commission is an agency of the State of Missouri established pursuant to Section 105.955, RSMo, in part for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of Chapter 130, RSMo.

2. Respondent Cottongim was an unsuccessful candidate in the April 2016 Laclede County School Board election.

3. Pursuant to Sections 105.957 and 105.961, RSMo, the Commission's staff investigated a complaint filed with the Commission and reported the investigation findings to the Commission.

4. Based on the investigation report, the Commission determined that there were reasonable grounds to believe that violations of law occurred, and it therefore authorized a hearing in this matter pursuant to Section 105.961.3, RSMo.

5. Using his own personal funds, Respondent Cottongim purchased yard signs relative to his candidacy, a true and accurate copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

6. Respondent Cottongim placed the yard signs in various locations in Laclede County.

7. The yard signs referred to in Exhibit A related to a candidate in the April 2016 election.

8. The yard signs referred to in Exhibit A should have contained a clear and conspicuous statement, "Paid for by Christopher Cottongim," but they did not.

JOINT PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

9. "Any person publishing, circulating, or distributing any printed matter relative to any candidate for public office or any ballot measure shall on the face of the printed matter identify in a clear and conspicuous manner the person who paid for the printed matter with the words 'Paid for by' followed by the proper identification of the sponsor pursuant to this section." § 130.031.8, RSMo.

10. "[P]rinted matter' shall be defined to include any pamphlet, circular, handbill, sample ballot, advertisement, including advertisements in any newspaper or other periodical, sign, including signs for display on motor vehicles, or other imprinted or lettered material." § 130.031.8, RSMo.

11. In regard to any printed matter paid for by a candidate from the candidate's personal funds, it shall be sufficient identification to print the first and last name by which the candidate is known. § 130.031.8(1), RSMo.

12. There is probable cause to believe that Respondent Cottongim violated Section 130.031.8, RSMo, by publishing, circulating and distributing yard signs relative to his candidacy without including a proper "paid for by" disclosure.

II.

Based on the foregoing, the parties hereto mutually agree and stipulate that the following shall constitute the order entered by the Missouri Ethics Commission in this matter. This order will be effective immediately upon the issuance of the Consent Order of the Missouri Ethics Commission without further action by any party:

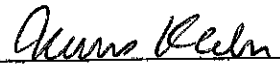
1. The parties understand that the Petitioner will maintain this Joint Stipulation as an open and public record of the Missouri Ethics Commission.
2. The Commission shall issue its Consent Order in the form attached hereto as Exhibit 1.
 - a. Respondent shall comply with all relevant sections of Chapter 130, RSMo.
 - b. It is the Order of the Missouri Ethics Commission that a fee is imposed against Respondent Cottongim in the amount of \$100, pursuant to Section 105.961.4(6), RSMo. The fee will be paid by check or money order made payable and sent to the Missouri Ethics Commission at the time of execution of this Joint Stipulation.
3. The parties consent to the entry of record and approval of this Joint Stipulation and to the termination of any further proceedings before the Commission based upon the Complaint filed by the Petitioner in the above action.
4. Respondent, together with his heirs, successors, and assigns, does hereby waive, release, acquit and forever discharge the Missouri Ethics Commission and its attorneys of or from any liability, claim, actions, causes of action, fees, costs and expenses, and compensation, including but not limited to, a claim for attorney's fees whatsoever which Respondent or

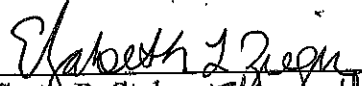
Respondent's attorney may now have or which they may hereafter have, which are based upon or arise out of the above cases.

SO AGREED:

RESPONDENT CHRISTOPHER COTTONGIM · PETITIONER MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

By: 
Christopher Cottongim Date

By:  10/14/16
James Klahr Date
Executive Director

By:  10/14/16
~~Curtis R. Stokes~~ Elizabeth Ziegler Date
Attorney for Petitioner Ziegler



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CONSENT ORDER

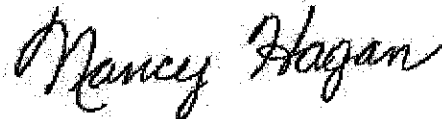
The parties have filed a Joint Stipulation of Facts, Waiver of Hearing, and Proposed Consent Order with the Missouri Ethics Commission. Accordingly, the Missouri Ethics Commission accepts as true the facts stipulated and finds that Respondent Cottongim violated Section 130.031.8, RSMo.

The Commission directs that the Joint Stipulation be adopted.

1. Respondent shall comply with all relevant sections of Chapter 130, RSMo.
2. It is the order of the Missouri Ethics Commission that a fee is imposed against Respondent in the amount of \$100 pursuant to Section 105.961.4(6), RSMo. The fee will be paid by check or money order made payable to and sent to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

SO ORDERED this 14th day of October, 2016

By:



Nancy Hagan, Chair
Missouri Ethics Commission