



MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

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Elizabeth L. Ziegler
Executive Director

Final Action: MEC No. 19-0001-I, Anthony McDonald and the St. Louis Guardian

Date: April 1, 2019

The Missouri Ethics Commission took final consideration of the complaint filed against Anthony McDonald and The St. Louis Guardian at its April 1, 2019 meeting.

The complaint that was filed with the Commission alleged that Anthony McDonald and the St. Louis Guardian failed to file a Direct Expenditure Report related to FaceBook advertisements opposing a candidate for the President, Board of Alderman race in the City of St. Louis. Additionally, the complaint alleged that McDonald and the St. Louis Guardian failed to include the required "paid-for-by" disclosures on printed and digital materials.

Interviews and documentation obtained during the MEC investigation do not support that FaceBook advertisements were campaign finance expenditures. Therefore, Mr. McDonald was not required to file a Direct Expenditure Report. Though they contained the likeness of a candidate, the messages in those advertisements were not expressly urging a vote for or against that candidate. Even if they had, the cost associated with creating and posting the videos did not meet the monetary threshold to require the filing of such a report. Similarly, Missouri statutes do not require "paid-for-by" disclosures on digital media, such as FaceBook or the St. Louis Guardian. McDonald produced no printed materials.

From the facts presented, the Commission found no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of the Chapter 130, RSMo, and dismissed the complaint.

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
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