



Missouri Ethics Commission

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Final Action: MEC No. 20-0096-I, Sheriff Paul Vescovo

Date: January 7, 2021

The Missouri Ethics Commission took final consideration of the complaint filed against Clay County Sheriff Paul Vescovo at its January 6, 2021 meeting.

The complaint filed with the Commission alleged that Sheriff Vescovo used public funds to oppose a local ballot measure proposing the adoption of a county constitution.

Section 115.646, RSMo, provides as follows:

No contribution or expenditure of public funds shall be made directly by any officer, employee or agent of any political subdivision to advocate, support, or oppose any ballot measure or candidate for public office. This section shall not be construed to prohibit any public official of a political subdivision from making public appearances or from issuing press releases concerning any such ballot measure.

The MEC's investigation found that Sheriff Vescovo, as a public official, was invited to appear at a meeting hosted by the Clay County Republican Central Committee relating to the proposed county constitution. Because he was unable to appear in person, Sheriff Vescovo wrote a letter, on office letterhead, expressing his opinion regarding the ballot measure. The letter was read aloud at the meeting in lieu of the Sheriff making a public appearance.

From the facts presented, and in light of the fact Sheriff Vescovo had the right to make public appearances on such issues, the Commission found no reasonable grounds exist to support a violation of Chapter 115, RSMo, under the circumstances presented, and dismissed the complaint.

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
Executive Director