



Missouri Ethics Commission

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Final Action: MEC No. 21-0054-I, Eric Greitens, Greitens for Missouri

Date: 3/11/2022

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The complaint filed with the Commission alleged Eric Greitens and Greitens for Missouri (GFM) failed to report in-kind contributions made to Eric Greitens's federal candidate committee, Greitens for US Senate (GFS). The alleged in-kind contributions included: the website, ericgreitens.com; payments to Octavian Group LLC for strategic planning; payments to Push Digital LLC for digital media; and payments to Driver Eight Media for media services. The complaint alleged each of these were for Eric Greitens's federal campaign.

The MEC is limited to investigating potential violations of state law which occurred within two years of receipt of a complaint. Therefore, this investigation did not and could not address reporting by GFS or the terms of the website licensing agreement discussed below. The MEC's investigation was limited to whether GFM made in-kind contributions to GFS.

The investigation showed the following:

Greitens for Missouri is Eric Greitens's (Greitens) candidate committee registered with the MEC in 2015 to support Greitens's campaigns for Missouri Governor in 2016. The committee is active and has a Statement of Committee Organization indicating its current purpose is to support Greitens for a statewide office in 2024.

On or about March 8, 2021, Senator Roy Blunt, announced he would not be seeking re-election in 2022. On March 22, 2021, Greitens appeared on Fox News Channel's Special Report with Bret Baier and announced he would be seeking election to the U.S. Senate in 2022. A Statement of Candidacy was filed with the Federal Election Commission (FEC) March 23, 2021, for Greitens for US Senate (GFS).

Website

The complaint alleged GFM failed to report an in-kind contribution to GFS when GFS began using a website design allegedly paid for by GFM.

Ericgreitens.com is an Internet domain name owned personally by Eric Greitens. Pursuant to a 2015 licensing agreement between Eric Greitens and GFM, GFM used the domain ericgreitens.com from 2015 through approximately March 20, 2021. While utilized by GFM, the

website underwent several design changes. In 2020, GFM reported paying Abrot Creative \$19,000 for web services.

In April 2021, Eric Greitens entered into a licensing agreement with GFS, thereby ending the agreement with GFM, and allowed GFS to use the domain ericgreitens.com.

Since March 23, 2021, the domain name, ericgreitens.com, has been used by GFS. On its April 2021 Quarterly report filed with the FEC, GFS reported an in-kind contribution from Eric Greitens in the amount of \$18,000 on March 23, 2021, for a website, consistent with the terms of the licensing agreement.

The agreement between Eric Greitens and GFS is similar to the agreement between Eric Greitens and GFM. The agreement with GFS states Eric Greitens will allow the committee use of the domain name. In exchange, the committee will provide enhancements to the website. Upon termination of the agreement, Eric Greitens will retain ownership of the enhancements indefinitely.

As structured, there was no requirement for GFM to report an in-kind contribution made to GFS. The Commission's current action should not be interpreted as the Commission's advisement to use such a licensing agreement under Missouri campaign finance laws.

Octavian Group LLC

On its January and April 2021 quarterly reports, GFM reported making expenditures to Octavian Group LLC for strategic planning. The complaint alleged Eric Greitens was not seeking state office at the time and the only "reasonable inference" was that these payments were connected to Eric Greitens's future federal campaign. The strategic planning services were not initially reported on Independent Contractor Expenditure Reports. On March 9, 2022, GFM filed amended January and April 2021 quarterly reports, including the Independent Contractor Reports, describing the services provided by Octavian Group for GFM as, "updating and maintaining social media assets owned or used by GFM; drafting communications for releases; strategic planning for potential state campaign, consult and manage GFM related media appearances."

The investigation did not find evidence that services provided by Octavian Group were in support of GFS. This finding was solidified by both the timing of the services as well as the amended reports.

Push Digital LLC

On its January 2021 Quarterly Report, GFM reported an expenditure incurred with Push Digital as of November 20, 2020, in the amount of \$47,222.31 for "digital media." On its April 2021 Quarterly Report, GFM reported paying this incurred expenditure on January 25, 2021. The complaint alleged this expenditure was connected to Eric Greitens's federal campaign. GFM did not initially include an independent contractor report describing the services rendered by Push Digital LLC.

The investigation supported that the payment made to Push Digital LLC in January 2021 was related to services provided to GFM in the Spring and Summer of 2020. Expenditures were not reported at that time due to ongoing disputes between GFM and the vendor. The amended January and April 2021 quarterly reports filed on March 9, 2022, include Independent Contractor Expenditure reports detailing services provided for GFM by Push Digital LLC.

Driver Eight Media

On its April 2021 Quarterly report, GFM reporting paying Driver Eight Media \$7,500 on March 10, 2021, for “media services.” Complainant alleged the only “reasonable inference” was that this payment was for the purpose of booking Eric Greitens on Fox News Channel for his March 22, 2021, federal campaign announcement.

The investigation showed that Driver Eight Media performed services for GFM in May through August 2020. The March 2021 payment was for services rendered in August 2020. Driver Eight Media did not perform services for GFM in 2021, and specifically, did not book Eric Greitens for the March 22, 2021, TV appearance announcing the Senate campaign.

GFM did not initially report this expenditure to Driver Eight Media on an Independent Contractor Expenditure report, however, the March 9, 2022, amended report did include the Independent Contractor Expenditure report for this expense.¹

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¹ The sole issue in this investigation relating to the amended reports is whether the expenditures were in support of GFS. This investigation is not addressing the statements made on amended reports by the committee including its description of the purposes for which the services were provided.