



Missouri Ethics Commission

Elizabeth L. Ziegler
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Final Action: MEC No. 22-0049-I, Missouri RINO Watch, Joshua Lehman

Date: 08/15/22

The Missouri Ethics Commission took final consideration of the complaint filed against Missouri RINO Watch and Joshua Lehman at its August 15, 2022, meeting.

The complaint filed with the Commission alleged that Missouri RINO Watch and Joshua Lehman failed to form and register a campaign finance committee with the MEC and file campaign finance disclosure reports. Alternatively, the complaint alleged if Missouri RINO Watch is not a committee, they failed to file Non-Committee Expenditure reports with the MEC.

Rightman LLC was registered as a limited liability company (LLC) with the Missouri Secretary of State (SOS) in November 2018, for the purpose of providing "consultation services to merchants, manufactures, and the like – with a special focus in the cannabis industry." Joshua Lehman (Lehman) was its organizer. Missouri RINO Watch was registered as a fictitious name in February 2022, with 100% ownership by Rightman LLC.

Lehman describes Missouri RINO Watch as a conservative media group with a focus on accountability of Conservative/Republican elected officials on the state and local levels. He achieves this through investigative journalism, a talk show and parody content. Missouri RINO Watch maintains a website, a YouTube channel and a Facebook page.

To date, Missouri RINO Watch has produced eleven podcasts. The group's podcasts discuss the voting histories of currently elected Missouri Senators and Representatives, redistricting, ranked choice voting, election fraud/secure elections and other political topics. Some of the individuals discussed on the podcast or guests may be up for re-election.

Its website contains seven articles written and posted by Lehman from October 13, 2021, through November 9, 2021. Topics include the Missouri gas tax, COVID-19, masking of children in schools and abortion. The group's Facebook page contains links to the weekly podcast on YouTube, publicizes votes of elected officials on various Missouri House and Senate bills, shares articles related to redistricting, rank choice voting, initiative petitions, voter fraud and other various political topics. Some content on the Facebook page is shared content which appears to support certain candidates. A limited amount of original content is related to certain elected office holders who are up for re-election, but it does not specifically support or oppose those candidates.

Missouri RINO Watch solicits funds through a crowdfunding site. The solicitation states the group has decided to take on the role as a "media group in Missouri focused on holding Republican Reps accountable." It further states, "The money raised will allow us to continue our fight for the great people of Missouri in exposing the Representatives that have betrayed their constituents when they needed them most." Its first donation was received on approximately

February 3, 2022. To date, Missouri RINO watch has received \$2,425. It also maintains an online merchandising store and may receive funding through subscriptions and/or donations from some of the streaming sources.

As outlined above, the investigation did not produce evidence Missouri RINO Watch accepted contributions, nor made expenditures, for the specific purpose of supporting or opposing candidates and/or ballot measure as required by the Missouri campaign finance law. The investigation also did not produce evidence that the LLC or Josh Lehman spent \$500 or more to support or oppose candidates and/or ballot measures

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

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