

Filed

AUG 04 2026

Missouri Ethics
Commission

BEFORE THE
MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION,	)	
	)	
Petitioner,	)	
	)	
v.	)	Case No. 25-0058-I
	)	
MELANIE STINNETT, Candidate,	)	
and FRIENDS OF MELANIE STINNETT,	)	
Candidate Committee,	)	
	)	
Respondents.	)	

**JOINT PROPOSED FINDINGS OF FACT,
CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND CONSENT ORDER**

The Missouri Ethics Commission ("MEC"), together with the Melanie Stinnett and her candidate committee, Friends of Melanie Stinnett ("Respondents"), collectively the "parties," jointly stipulate and consent to action as set forth here (the "agreement").

Respondents acknowledge their right to have this agreement reviewed by counsel. Respondents further acknowledge they have received actual notice of the legal complaint filed by the MEC in this case, have reviewed the contents of the legal complaint, and submit themselves to the jurisdiction of the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Respondents further acknowledge they are aware of the various rights and privileges afforded by law, including but not limited to: the right to appear and be represented by counsel at a hearing before the MEC; the right to have all allegations against Respondents proven upon the record by competent and substantial evidence; the

right to cross-examine any witnesses appearing at the hearing against Respondents; the right to present evidence on Respondents' behalf at the hearing; and the right to a decision upon the record of the hearing. Being aware of these rights, Respondents knowingly and voluntarily waive each one of these rights and freely enter into this agreement and agree to abide by its terms.

I.

The parties mutually agree and stipulate, subject to adoption by the Missouri Ethics Commission, the following shall constitute the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law in this matter:

FINDINGS OF FACT

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

2. Melanie Stinnett is the duly elected State Representative for District 30, and she is registered as a candidate in the August 4, 2026 primary election.

3. Friends of Melanie Stinnett is a candidate committee that registered with the MEC on October 31, 2021.

4. Pursuant to §§ 105.957 and 105.961, RSMo, the MEC's staff investigated a complaint that was filed with the Commission and reported the investigation findings to

the Commission.

5. The Commission determined there were reasonable grounds to believe violations of the law had occurred and authorized a hearing pursuant to § 105.961.3, RSMo.

6. On September 2, 2025, Respondents filed a 48 Hour Report of Contribution Received Over \$5,000, disclosing receipt of a \$200,000 contribution from Melanie Stinnett.

7. On October 15, 2025, Respondents filed the October 2025 Quarterly Report, which disclosed receipt of a \$200,000 loan from Respondent Melanie Stinnett on September 2, 2025.

8. The October 2025 Quarterly Report filed by Respondents on October 15, 2025, showed the "Money on Hand at the close of this reporting period" as: \$349,757.74.

9. This balance, \$349,757.74, includes the \$200,000 contribution that was the loan from Respondent Melanie Stinnett.

10. The close of the reporting period for the October 2025 Quarterly Report was September 30, 2025.

11. The \$200,000 contribution was not deposited into the committee's official depository account until November 7, 2025.

12. The October 2025 Quarterly Report filed on October 15, 2025 was electronically signed by Respondent Melanie Stinnett beneath the following attestation:

"I certify that this report, comprised of this cover page and all attached forms, is complete, true and accurate."

13. Respondents have subsequently filed amended reports showing receipt of the contribution on November 7, 2025.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

14. For the purposes of campaign finance disclosures, the statutory definition of "contribution" includes loans. Section 130.011(12), RSMo.

15. "All contributions which the committee receives in money, checks and other negotiable instruments shall be deposited in a committee's official depository account." Section 130.021.4. RSMo.

16. Chapter 130 does not expressly state how promptly a contribution must be deposited into the official depository account after receipt; however, promptness is implied. For example:

- a. Agents receiving contributions on behalf of a committee cannot hold those contributions for more than five days. Section 130.036.1, RSMo.
- b. A contribution is considered "accepted" if it is not rejected and returned to the donor with ten business days after it is received. Section 130.036.2, RSMo.

17. Committees are required to file campaign finance disclosure reports which include: "The total amount of cash on hand as of the closing date of the reporting period covered[.]" Section 130.041.1(5), RSMo.

18. "The disclosure report shall be signed and attested by the committee

treasurer or deputy treasurer and by the candidate in case of a candidate committee.”

Section 130.041.3, RSMo.

19. There is probable cause to believe Respondents violated § 130.021.4, RSMo, by failing to deposit a \$200,000 contribution until 67 days after it was received.

20. There is probable cause to believe Respondents violated § 130.041.1(5), RSMo, by filing campaign finance disclosure reports that contained inaccurate information.

II.

Based on the foregoing, the parties mutually agree and stipulate, subject to adoption by the Missouri Ethics Commission, the following shall constitute the Order issued by the Missouri Ethics Commission in this matter:

CONSENT ORDER

The Missouri Ethics Commission finds probable cause to believe Respondents violated §§ 130.021.4 and 130.041.1(5), RSMo, and pursuant to § 105.961.4(6), RSMo, hereby **ORDERS**:

1. Respondents shall comply with all provisions of Chapter 130, RSMo.
2. A fee is imposed against Respondents in the amount of \$2,000; however, if Respondents pay \$200 within 45 days of the date of the consent order, the remainder of the fee will be stayed.
3. Respondents are jointly and severally liable for the payment of this fee.
4. Regardless of the stay in paragraph 2, if there is probable cause to believe that any Respondent has committed any further violation of the campaign finance laws in Chapter 130, RSMo, within the two-year period from the date of this order, then the Respondent who committed the new violation will be required to pay the remainder of the fee. That remainder will be due immediately upon final adjudication of finding probable cause.
5. Fees will be paid by check or money order made payable to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

III.

The parties understand that the MEC will maintain this agreement as an open record of the Commission. This agreement does not bind the MEC or restrict the remedies available concerning any violations not expressly detailed here, including any future violations. Each party agrees to pay all their own fees and expenses incurred as a result of this case, its litigation, and/or its disposition.

Respondents, together with their heirs, assigns, agents, representatives and attorneys, do hereby waive, release, acquit and forever discharge the MEC, the Commission's respective members, employees, agents and attorneys including former members, employees, agents and attorneys, of, or from any liability, claim, actions, causes of action, fees, costs, expenses and compensation, including, but not limited to, any claim for attorney's fees and expenses, whether or not now known or contemplated, including, but not limited to, any claims pursuant to § 536.087, RSMo, as amended, or any claim arising under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, which now or in the future may be based upon, arise out of, or relate to any of the matters raised in this case or its litigation or from the negotiation or execution of this Joint Stipulation. The parties acknowledge that this paragraph is severable from the remaining portions of this agreement in that it survives in perpetuity even in the event that any court or administrative tribunal deems this agreement or any portion thereof void or unenforceable.

This agreement shall become effective immediately upon (1) the signature of all

parties; (2) the adoption of the Joint Proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law by the Missouri Ethics Commission; and (3) the issuance of a Final Order by the Commission, without any further action of the parties.

SO AGREED:

RESPONDENTS

FRIENDS OF MELANIE STINNETT

Signed by: Melanie Stinnett 7/30/2026
By Melanie Stinnett Date
Candidate

MELANIE STINNETT

Signed by: Melanie Stinnett 7/30/2026
Melanie Stinnett Date

Signed by: Courtney Steelman 7/30/2026
Courtney Steelman Date
Husch Blackwell
Attorney for Respondents

PETITIONER

MISSOURI ETHICS COMMISSION

Stacey Heislen 8/4/2026
Stacey Heislen Date
Executive Director

Laura E. Elsbury
Laura E. Elsbury Date
Attorney for Petitioner

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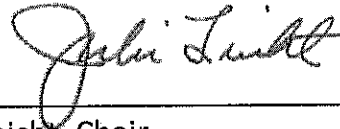
CONSENT ORDER

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5. Fees will be paid by check or money order made payable to the Missouri Ethics Commission.

SO ORDERED, this 7th day of August 2026.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Julie Leicht", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Julie Leicht, Chair
Missouri Ethics Commission