

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF:)
COMPLAINT C2013-145)

State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)

vs.)

Henry S. Copeland,)
Respondent.)

DECISION AND ORDER

STATE ETHICS
COMMISSION

2014 MAY 12 PM 4: 35

RECEIVED

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission by virtue of a complaint filed by the Commission on June 14, 2013. On September 18, 2013, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 8-13-320(10)(i)(Supp. 2012), the State Ethics Commission reviewed the above-captioned complaint charging Respondent, Henry S. Copeland, with a violation of Section 8-13-1308 and probable cause was found.

Present at the Hearing on March 19, 2014 were Commission Members, Phillip Florence, Jr., Chair, E. Kay Biermann Brohl, and James I. Warren. Respondent was not present, but he was duly noticed. Complainant was represented by Cathy L. Hazelwood, General Counsel. The following charge was considered:

COUNT ONE
FAILURE TO FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(D), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That the Respondent, Henry S. Copeland, a candidate for Charleston County School Board, did in Richland County, on or about October 22, 2012, fail to timely file a pre-election Campaign Disclosure Report in violation of Section of 8-13-1308(D).

FINDINGS OF FACT

Having carefully reviewed the evidence presented, the Commission finds as fact:

1. The Respondent, Henry S. Copeland, was a candidate for Charleston County School Board in a November 2012 election.

2. Kristin Smith, administrative coordinator of the Commission's non-compliance office, testified that on July 16, 2012 Respondent filed a Statement of Economic Interests (SEI) form stating he was a candidate for Charleston County School Board in the November 6, 2012 election. On April 15, 2013 a \$100.00 penalty was assessed for failure to file a pre-election Campaign Disclosure (CD) form by October 22, 2012. On May 16, 2013 the letter of April 15, 2013 was sent certified. On May 18, 2013, according to the United States Postal Service website, the certified letter was delivered at 5:39 p.m. On May 29, 2013 penalties began accruing at \$10 per day for the first ten days and on June 8, 2013 at \$100 per day.

2. Daniel Choate, State Ethics Commission Investigator, testified that on June 25, 2013 Respondent advised him that he would contact the Commission staff for help in filing his CD. On July 9, 2013 the Commission investigator left a message at Respondent's telephone regarding the CD that had not been filed. There has been no compliance and the penalty is \$5000.00.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based upon the Findings of Fact, the Commission concludes, as a matter of law:

1. During all times relevant, the Respondent, Henry S. Copeland, was a candidate as defined by Section 8-13-1300(4).

2. The State Ethics Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.

3. Section 8-13-1308(D) provides that a candidate must file a pre-election

Campaign Disclosure form 15 days before the election.

4. Section 8-13-1510(1) provides as follows:

Except as otherwise specifically provided in this chapter, a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report or fails to file a required statement or report must be assessed a civil penalty as follows:

(1) a fine of one hundred dollars if not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter;

5. Section 8-13-130 states in part:

The State Ethics Commission may levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is found in violation, or who admits to a violation, of the "Ethics, Government Accountability and Campaign Reform Act of 1991". The fee must be used to reimburse the commission for costs associated with the investigation and hearing of a violation.

6. Section 8-13-320(10)(l) provides:

(i) requiring the public official, public member, or public employee to pay a civil penalty of not more than two thousand dollars for each violation.

DECISION

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the State Ethics Commission has determined based upon a preponderance of evidence that Respondent Henry S. Copeland is in violation of Section 8-13-1308; and therefore, Respondent Henry S. Copeland is hereby Publicly Reprimanded and he is assessed a fine of \$2,000.00, in addition to the late-filing penalty of \$5,000.00 and he is assessed an administrative fee of \$500.00.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, pursuant to Section 8-13-320, a Judgment in the amount of \$7,500.00 is, and shall be entered against Respondent.

IT IS FURTHER THE ORDER OF THIS COMMISSION that the Clerk of Court

of the County in which Respondent was last known to reside shall enter this Order in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the State Ethics Commission, in the amount of \$7,500.00 upon the Commission's filing of same with the Clerk of Court's Office.

FINALLY, Respondent Henry S. Copeland has ten (10) days from receipt of this order to appeal this Decision and Order to the full Commission.

IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 8th DAY OF May, 2014.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION



PHILLIP FLORENCE, JR.
HEARING CHAIR

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA