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STATE ETHICS  
COMMISSION

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

COMPLAINT FORM

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

CASE NUMBER

c 2022-054

COMPLAINANT: Caitlin Fisk

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 843-810-6262

TITLE: N/A

RESPONDENT: Michael Ramsey

ADDRESS: [REDACTED]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]

TITLE: School Board Trustee

Set forth in detail specific facts upon which you based your complaint against above-named respondent (only detailed, clear factual allegations will be considered. If additional space is needed, attach supplemental sheets).

While reviewing Economic Interest Statements, it appears that current Berkeley County School Board Trustee, Michael Ramsey, has been an elected official since November of 2016 and has not ever disclosed his rental properties that he owns. Mr. Ramsey owns 5 rental properties, 4 since 2007 and 1 since 2010. These issues give the appearance that Mr. Ramsey may not fully understand his ethical duties as a public servant and is demonstrating a lack of understanding of full and correct disclosure, which could create a lack of good faith with the general public. Therefore, I request an investigation into these violations.

If there is a finding of probable cause, the following documents become public record: the complaint, the response (if any) by respondent, and the notice of hearing. If a hearing is to be held, the final order and all exhibits become public record. If no hearing is held following a finding of probable cause, the final disposition of the matter becomes public record.

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF Dorchester

Personally appeared before me Paige Reyes who, first being duly sworn, says that he/she has read and knows the contents of the above complaint and that the allegations contained therein, are true and correct to the best of his/her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those he/she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this

3rd day of May, 2022

[REDACTED]

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires 01/03/2022



[REDACTED]

Complainant Signature

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
COUNTY OF RICHLAND ) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION  
) )  
) )  
IN THE MATTER OF: )  
) )  
Complaint C2022-054 )  
) )  
Michael Ramsey ) **NOTICE OF HEARING**  
Respondent. )  
) )  
Caitlin Fisk )  
Complainant. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

The State Ethics Commission has determined that there is probable cause pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, to support the allegations made in the above-captioned complaint. The State Ethics Commission will, therefore, convene a formal hearing into the matters, in accordance with Section 8-13-320(10)(i) & (j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations, S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.) on April 20, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. at the State Ethics Commission Hearing Room located at: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210.

The following allegations will be heard:

**COUNT ONE**  
**FAILURE TO REPORT INCOME ON STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS**  
**SECTION 8-13-1120(A)(10) S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Michael Ramsey, Berkeley County School District Board Member, did in Richland County, fail to report Respondent’s private income received from 94 Dawgs Properties, LLC and 5605 Attaway, LLC on his 2019 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), in violation of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).

**COUNT TWO**  
**FAILURE TO REPORT INCOME ON STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS**  
**SECTION 8-13-1120(A)(10) S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Michael Ramsey, Berkeley County School District Board Member, did in Richland County, fail to report Respondent's private income received from 94 Dawgs Properties, LLC and 5605 Attaway, LLC on his 2020 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).

**COUNT THREE**  
**FAILURE TO REPORT INCOME ON STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS**  
**SECTION 8-13-1120(A)(10) S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Michael Ramsey, Berkeley County School District Board Member, did in Richland County, fail to report Respondent's private income received from 94 Dawgs Properties, LLC and 5605 Attaway, LLC on his 2021 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).

**COUNT FOUR**  
**FAILURE TO REPORT INCOME ON STATEMENT OF ECONOMIC INTERESTS**  
**SECTION 8-13-1120(A)(10) S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED**

That Michael Ramsey, Berkeley County School District Board Member, did in Richland County, fail to report Respondent's private income received from 94 Dawgs Properties, LLC and 5605 Attaway, LLC on his 2022 SEI, in violation of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).

You have the right to be represented by counsel, the right to call and examine witnesses, the right to introduce exhibits, and the right to cross-examine opposing witnesses. This hearing will be open to the public as required by Section 8-13-320(10)(j), Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended. The procedures to be followed are set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, Section 1-23-10, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976 as amended the State Ethics Act, Section 8-13-100, et seq., Code of Laws, South Carolina, 1976, as amended, and State Ethics Commission Regulations S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 52-707 (1997 Cum. Supp.).

A pre-hearing conference may be scheduled prior to the hearing to allow exchange of

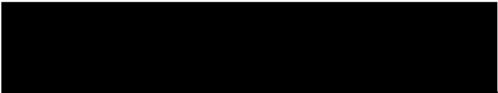
witness lists and evidence, marking of exhibits, and disposition of motions or pleadings. In the event you fail to appear, judgment by default will be rendered against you. If there are any questions concerning the above notice or hearing times, please contact the State Ethics Commission.

  
Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director  
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 19<sup>th</sup> day,  
of January 2023.

**Certificate of Service by Certified Mail**

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on Michael Ramsey, 5811 Robinhood Drive, Hanahan, SC 29410 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 23rd day of January 2023, by **CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



**Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant**  
State Ethics Commission (803) 253-4192

Columbia, South Carolina

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA )  
 COUNTY OF RICHLAND )  
 )  
 IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 COMPLAINT C2022-054 )  
 )  
 Caitlin Fisk, )  
 Complainant, )  
 )  
 Michael Ramsey, )  
 Respondent. )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ )

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

**CONSENT ORDER**

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on May 12, 2022. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Michael Ramsey (Respondent) was considered by the Commission and probable cause was found to warrant an evidentiary hearing. Prior to the call of the case, Respondent agreed to the following:

**STATEMENTS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a Trustee for Berkeley County School Board.
2. Respondent timely filed his Statements of Economic (SEI) Interests in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Respondent disclosed his government income therein, but failed to disclose any private sources of income.
3. On May 23, 2022, following the filing of the Complaint, Respondent amended his 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 SEIs to report his sources of private income. Respondent amended his SEIs prior to being contacted by a Commission Investigator.
4. A Commission Investigator subsequently contacted Respondent and explained that filers were required to disclose private sources of income as of 2017. Respondent stated he was unaware of this requirement, but that he had already taken corrective action to amend his SEIs.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

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

1. At all times relevant, Respondent was a “public official” pursuant to Section 8-13-100(27).  
Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1120(A)(10) of the Act requires public officials to disclose, in relevant part:  
  
a listing of the private sources of income received in the previous year by the filer or a member of his immediate family.
3. Section 8-13-320(10)(l) allows the Commission to require a public official to pay a civil penalty of up to \$2,000 for each violation of the Ethics Act.
4. Section 8-13-130 allows the Commission to “levy an enforcement or administrative fee on a person who is in violation” of the Ethics Act.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Commission found probable cause to charge Respondent with eight (8) counts of violating Section 8-13-1120(A)(10) for failing to disclose eight (8) private sources of income on his 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 SEIs. In mitigation, Respondent states he was unaware that the law changed in 2017 to require disclosure of private sources of income. Respondent states he took immediate corrective action as soon as he received the Complaint. The Commission acknowledges that Respondent would have been offered the opportunity to correct these errors prior to the filing of a Complaint had this matter proceeded through the Commission’s normal noncompliance process.

### **DISPOSITION**

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of eight (8) counts of Section 8-13-1120(A)(10).

2. The Commission hereby adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues a written warning to Respondent and orders the Respondent to pay the Commission, within six (6) months from receipt of this Order, an administrative fee of \$200. The Commission declines to issue any civil penalty.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to violations of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$200 (less any money paid to the Commission) in the event he does not make full and timely payment as provided for in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the Clerk of Court's Office in the County of Respondent's last known residence. Upon said filing, the Clerk shall enter this Order in the amount of \$200 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 26<sup>th</sup> DAY OF February 2023.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

  
SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR

  
MICHAEL RAMSEY  
RESPONDENT