

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

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STATE ETHICS
COMMISSION

COMPLAINT FORM

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER

C 2022-016

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Patricia G. Parker
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Candidate – Dorchester County School
District Two

Section 8-13-1308, S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires candidates to file Campaign Disclosures within ten (10) days of receiving or expending \$500; fifteen (15) days prior to each election; within ten (10) days of the end of each quarter; and a final report when the campaign account is closed. In addition, certified campaign reports detailing campaign contributions and expenditures must contain the total of contributions accepted, the name and address of each person making a contribution, the total expenditures made by or on behalf of the candidate or committee, and the name and address of each person to whom an expenditure is made from campaign funds. Pursuant to Section 8-13-1362 and Regulation 52-504 (C), the Pre-Election and quarterly report are required even when there have been no contributions or expenditures.

Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Campaign Disclosure was due no later than October 10, 2019, January 10, 2020, April 10, 2020, July 10, 2020, October 10, 2020, and January 10, 2021. Respondent was sent an email reminder thirty days before each Campaign Disclosure deadline.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by letters dated July 2, 2021 and August 20, 2021 as described in the attached. To date, no properly completed October 10, 2019, January 10, 2020, April 10, 2020, July 10, 2020, October 10, 2020, or January 10, 2021 Campaign Disclosure has been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B) and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

All investigations, inquiries, hearings, and accompanying documents must remain confidential unless respondent waives the right to confidentiality. 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. The willful release of confidential information is a misdemeanor, and any person releasing such confidential information, upon conviction, must be fined not more than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) or imprisoned not more than one year. Section 8-13-320(10)(g).

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan L. Walker who, first being duly sworn, says that 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 her own knowledge, except for those matters therein based upon information and belief, and as to those she believes them to be true.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of February 2022

[REDACTED]
Meghan L. Walker, Executive Director

[REDACTED]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/22/26

SEC-7 (Revised 8/2019)

REPLY TO: 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, South Carolina 29210 (803)253-4192
FAXED COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF:)

Complaint C2022-016)

State Ethics Commission)
Complainant.)

NOTICE OF HEARING

Patricia G. Parker)
Respondent.)

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, 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 August 15, 2024 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 allegation will be heard:

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

That Patricia G. Parker, former candidate for Dorchester County District Two School Board, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2019 Quarter 3 Campaign Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(B).

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 Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 22nd day,
of January 2024.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on RESPONDENT Patricia G. Parker, 400 Corey Blvd., Summerville, SC 29483 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 21st day of January 2024, 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 C2022-016)
)
 State Ethics Commission,)
 Complainant,)
)
 Patricia G. Parker,)
 Respondent.)
 _____)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on February 1, 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 Patricia G. Parker (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. Respondent was an unsuccessful candidate for Dorchester County School District Two Board of Trustees in a November 8, 2016 election.
2. Prior to the filing of the Complaint, Respondent’s most recently filed Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) was a 2019 Quarter 2 CDR showing a balance of \$293.82 in contributions. Respondent thereafter failed to file any quarterly CDRs.
3. In a July 2, 2021 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of her failure to timely file a 2019 Quarter 3 CDR.¹
4. On August 20, 2021, the certified letter was returned as “Return to Sender – Unclaimed.” The letter was remailed first-class with a United States Postal Service (USPS) tracking number.
5. According to USPS, the letter was delivered to Respondent’s address of record on August 23, 2021

¹ The Commission acknowledges that the Complaint also alleged the Respondent failed to file quarterly CDRs for 2019 Quarter 4 through 2021 Quarter 1. However, the Commission ultimately found probable cause in regard to only the 2019 Quarter 3 CDR.

at 11:24 a.m.

6. On August 25, 2021, Respondent spoke with Commission staff and stated she had a campaign bank account that was later used as a personal account.
7. On September 2, 2021, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$10.00 per day.
8. On September 9, 2021, Respondent notified Commission staff that she had requested older bank statements for her campaign bank account and that she needed these statements in order to reconcile her campaign bank account before she could proceed with filing her CDR. Respondent was given additional time to come into compliance.
9. On September 12, 2021, late-filing penalties began to accrue at \$100.00 per day.
10. On December 20, 2023, Commission staff assisted Respondent with reconciling her campaign bank account, which revealed Respondent's campaign funds reached a zero balance on September 20, 2018. Respondent thereafter filed her 2019 Quarter 3/Final CDR and is now in compliance.

2019
JEF

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 "candidate" pursuant to Section 8-13-1300(4). Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Section 8-13-1308(B) provides:

Following the filing of an initial certified campaign report, additional certified campaign reports must be filed within ten days following the end of each calendar quarter in which contributions are received or expenditures are made, whether before or after an election until the campaign account undergoes final disbursement pursuant to the provisions of Section 8-13-1370.

3. Section 8-13-1510(A) provides, in relevant part:

. . . a person required to file a report or statement under this chapter who files a late statement or report . . . must be assessed a civil penalty as follows: (1) a fine of one hundred dollars if the statement or report is not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter; and (2) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement or report has not been filed, a

fine of ten dollars per calendar day for the first ten days after notice has been given, and one hundred dollars for each additional calendar day in which the required statement or report is not filed, not exceeding five thousand dollars.

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 one (1) count of violating 8-13-1308(B) for failing to file a 2019 Quarter 3 CDR. Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits she violated the Ethics Act as described herein. In mitigation, Respondent states she believed she filed all necessary reports. Respondent further asserts that, during the filing period, she was a caretaker for her mother who had been diagnosed with cancer. Additionally, Respondent states she has since retired and has little disposable income. Respondent accepts responsibility for her failure to file.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of 8-13-1308(B).
2. The Commission adopts the Statements of Fact, Conclusions of Law, Discussion, and Disposition as agreed upon by the Respondent.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this Public Reprimand and orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within one (1) year from receipt of this Order, a reduced late-filing penalty of \$100.00 and an administrative fee of \$300.00, for a total of \$400.00.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that she is confessing to a judgment of \$400.00 in the event she does not make payment as provided for in this Order, in which case the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent with the County Clerk of Court in Respondent’s last known County of residence, who shall enter this Order in the amount of \$400.00 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 3rd DAY OF April 2024.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SCOTT E. FRICK, CHAIR


PATRICIA G. PARKER
RESPONDENT