

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:

CASE NUMBER

C 2024-080

COMPLAINT FORM

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

RESPONDENT: Albert S. Gregory
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Commissioner – Santuc Fire District

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 an accumulated aggregate of \$500.00 or more; 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 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 14, 2020 and October 19, 2020.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by letters dated January 26, 2024 and March 8, 2024 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure has not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A), Section 8-13-1308(D)(1), and Section 8-13-1308 (F), S.C. Code Ann., 1976, as amended.

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 Richland

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson 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
11th day of October, 2021

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

[REDACTED]
Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission expires 01/12/26

SEC-7 (Revised 3/2022)

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

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA)
COUNTY OF RICHLAND) BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
))
IN THE MATTER OF:))
))
Complaint C2024-080))
))
State Ethics Commission) **NOTICE OF HEARING**
Complainant.))
))
Albert S. Gregory))
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 Commission will convene a formal hearing into the matter 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 Thursday August 21, 2025 at 9:30 a.m. at the 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 FILE A PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Albert S. Gregory, candidate for Santuc Fire District Commission, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR), in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

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

That Albert S. Gregory, candidate for Santuc Fire District Commission, did in Richland

County, fail to file a 2024 Pre-Election CDR, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

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.

Dated this 21st day,
of May 2025.



Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Albert S. Gregory, 631 Santuc Drive, Union, SC 29379 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 10th day of June 2025, 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 C2024-080)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
Albert S. Gregory)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on October 11, 2024. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Albert S. Gregory (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 has served on the Santuc Volunteer Fire Department's Board of Commissioners (Board) since 2008. Prior to the filing of the Complaint, Respondent's most recent election was on November 3, 2020.
2. Respondent did not file a 2020 Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) before the election.
3. In a January 26, 2024 certified letter, the Commission attempted to notify Respondent of his failure to timely file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR. However, the certified letter was returned to the Commission on March 4, 2024.
4. On March 8, 2024, the letter was re-mailed via first-class mail with a United States Postal Service (USPS) tracking number.

5. According to the USPS, the first-class letter was delivered to Respondent's address of record on March 12, 2024 at 12:56 p.m.
6. On September 9, 2024, a Commission staff member telephoned Respondent and informed him that he was required to file a 2020 Pre-Election CDR. Respondent stated he was driving at the time and was unable to file. The staff member sent a text message to Respondent immediately after the phone call to reiterate the requirement.
7. Respondent was subsequently re-elected to the Board in a November 5, 2024 election.
8. Respondent did not file a Pre-Election CDR prior to his 2024 election.
9. On March 7, 2025, following the filing of the Complaint, a Commission Investigator contacted Respondent. Respondent advised that he had not received the Commission's letter in 2024 and stated that he would need assistance in filing the required CDRs.
10. On March 12, 2025, Respondent filed his 2020 and 2024 Pre-Election CDRs with the assistance of Commission staff. The CDRs revealed, and the Commission's investigation confirmed, that Respondent did not spend or raise money during either election cycle.

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(A) provides, in relevant part:

. . . a candidate who does not receive or expend campaign contributions totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more must file an initial certified campaign report fifteen days before an election.
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 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 the statement or report is not filed within five days after the established deadline provided by law in this chapter; (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 two (2) counts of violating Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to timely file 2020 and 2024 Pre-Election CDRs. Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits he violated the Ethics Act as outlined herein. In mitigation, Respondent states he has served continuously on the Board for approximately seventeen (17) years, and that this is his first Commission Complaint. Respondent states that he did not receive the Commission’s correspondence in 2024. Respondent further states that he shares a name with his father and that the USPS occasionally mixes up their mail. The Commission acknowledges that the return receipt for the Commission’s 2024 letter did not contain a signature. Finally, Respondent states that it was not his intention to hide information from the Commission or the public.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission finds Respondent in violation of two (2) counts of Section 8-13-1308(A).
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 to Respondent and orders Respondent to pay the Commission, within nine (9) months from receipt of this Order, a

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late-filing penalty of \$200.00 (\$100.00 per CDR), and an administrative fee of \$400.00, for a total of \$600.00. Given the uncertainty regarding Respondent's receipt of the Commission's 2024 correspondence, the Commission declines to assess additional late-filing penalties pursuant to Section 8-13-1510(A)(2).

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to a violation of the Ethics Act, but also confessing to a judgment of \$600.00 in the event he 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 \$600.00 (less any money paid) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS ~~27~~²⁶ DAY OF ~~July~~^{August} 2025.
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STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


ALBERT S. GREGORY
RESPONDENT