

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER

C 2024-097

COMPLAINT FORM

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

RESPONDENT: Patricia Pringle
ADDRESS: [REDACTED]
TELEPHONE NUMBER: [REDACTED]
TITLE: Clarendon County Auditor

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 an Initial Campaign Disclosure was due no later than March 26, 2022 after paying a \$2,603.44 filing fee on March 16, 2022.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by a certified letter dated November 18, 2022 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Initial Campaign Disclosure has not been received. All in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A) 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
18th day of December, 2024

[REDACTED]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

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

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 C2024-097)	
)	
State Ethics Commission)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.)	
)	
Patricia Pringle)	
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 AN INITIAL CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Patricia Pringle, Auditor of Clarendon County, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2022 Initial 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(D)(1), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Patricia Pringle, Auditor of Clarendon County, did in Richland County, fail to file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(D)(1).

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 21st day,
of May 2025.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Patricia Pringle, 1329 Pringle Road, Pinewood, SC 29125 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 C2024-097)
State Ethics Commission,)
Complainant,)
Patricia Pringle,)
Respondent.)

BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on December 13, 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 Patricia Pringle (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 has served as the elected Auditor for Clarendon County. Prior to the filing of the Complaint, Respondent's most recent election was a November 8, 2022 general election.
2. On March 16, 2022, Respondent paid a \$2,603.44 filing fee and submitted a Statement of Intention of Candidacy and Party Pledge to the Clarendon County Board of Voter Registration and Elections.
3. Respondent did not file an Initial Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) within ten (10) days of paying the \$2,603.44 filing fee.
4. In a November 18, 2022 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of her failure to timely file a 2022 Initial CDR. The certified letter was mailed to Respondent's address of record at 1294 Pringle Road in Pinewood, South Carolina.
5. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS), the certified letter was "Delivered, Left with Individual" on November 21, 2022 at 1:31 p.m. The USPS return receipt did not contain a

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signature.

6. On December 13, 2024, the Complaint was filed and mailed to Respondent's updated address of record at 1329 Pringle Road in Pinewood, South Carolina. The Complaint was delivered on December 19, 2024.
7. On December 31, 2024, prior to any contact from a Commission Investigator, Respondent properly amended her CDRs to disclose the filing fee.¹

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. Respondent was required to file an Initial CDR within ten (10) days of paying the \$2,603.44 filing fee pursuant to Section 8-13-1308(A), which provides, in relevant part:

Upon the receipt or expenditure of campaign contributions or the making of independent expenditures totaling an accumulated aggregate of five hundred dollars or more, a candidate or committee required to file a statement of organization pursuant to Section 8-13-1304(A) must file an initial certified campaign report within ten days of these initial receipts or expenditures . . .

3. Pursuant to Section 8-13-1510(A)(1), Respondent incurred a \$100.00 late-filing penalty for her failure to timely file an Initial CDR:

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 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

¹ By December 31, 2024, Respondent had already filed a Final CDR for the 2022 election cycle and was therefore unable to retroactively create a 2022 Initial CDR. However, Respondent was able to amend her 2022 Pre-Election CDR to disclose the filing fee.

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 Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to file an Initial CDR by March 26, 2022 (the tenth day following payment of the \$2,603.44 filing fee).² Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges she violated the Ethics Act when she failed to timely file the 2022 Initial CDR. As mitigation, Respondent states, and the Commission acknowledges, that her only expenditure for the 2022 election cycle was the filing fee. Respondent further states that she did not receive the Commission’s November 18, 2022 certified letter that was purportedly delivered on November 21, 2022 to 1294 Pringle Road. Respondent states that she no longer lived at 1294 Pringle Road in November of 2022. Rather, she had moved to her recently deceased father’s home located at 1329 Pringle Road, where she received the Complaint. Respondent further states that she contacted the Commission promptly after she received the Complaint and disclosed the required information.

DISPOSITION

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

² The Commission also found probable cause to believe Respondent failed to timely file a 2022 Pre-Election CDR. However, Respondent filed the 2022 Pre-Election CDR late on November 22, 2023, which was prior to the filing of this Complaint. Therefore, the associated \$100.00 late-filing penalty is being handled through the Commission’s standard non-compliance process, along with two (2) other CDRs (a 2018 Pre-Election CDR and a 2018 Initial CDR) for which \$100.00 late-filing penalties were assessed. Accordingly, the Commission declines to proceed on this charge.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues a written warning and orders the Respondent to pay the Commission, within ninety (90) days from receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$100.00³ and an administrative fee of \$500.00, for a total of \$600.00.

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

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 26 DAY OF AUGUST 2025.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

[Redacted signature area]

[Redacted signature area]

PATRICIA PRINGLE
RESPONDENT

³ The Commission limited Respondent's late-filing penalty to \$100.00 because it is questionable whether Respondent received certified notice of her failure to file the 2022 Initial CDR pursuant to Section 8-13-1510(A)(2).