STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

COMPLAINT FORM

FOR COMMISSION USE ONLY:
CASE NUMBER
C 2025-004

COMPLAINANT: State Ethics Commission
ADDRESS: 201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150

Columbia, SC 29210

TELEPHONE NUMBER: (803) 253-4192

RESPONDENT: Take Back Our Republic
ADDRESS: Mr. John Pudner
[redacted]

TELEPHONE NUMBER: [redacted]

TITLE: Lobbyist's Principal

In accordance with Section 2-17-35, South Carolina Code of Laws, 1976, as amended, each Lobbyist's Principal must file disclosure statements no later than June thirtieth and January thirty-first of each year covering lobbyist payments and expenditures attributable to lobbying during that filing period.

The Respondent registered with the State Ethics Commission on June 25, 2021 as a Lobbyist's Principal. Records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Lobbyist's Principal Disclosure Statement for the reporting period of June 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021 was due no later than January 31, 2022.

Respondent was reminded of the filing requirement by letters sent February 3, 2023, May 23, 2023, June 27, 2023, July 13, 2023, and May 7, 2024 as described in the attached. In addition, an email reminder was sent thirty days prior to the deadline. To date, a properly completed January 31, 2022 Lobbyist's Principal Disclosure Statement has not been received. All in violation of Section 2-17-35, 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
8th day of January, 2025

[redacted]

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

[redacted]

Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director

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 C2025-004	)	
State Ethics Commission Complainant.	)	**NOTICE OF HEARING**
Take Back Our Republic 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, February 19, 2026 at 9:30 a.m. at the 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 REGISTER AS LOBBYIST'S PRINCIPAL
SECTION 2-17-35, S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

That Take Back Our Republic, a Lobbyist's Principal, did in Richland County, fail to file a January 31, 2022 Lobbyist Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 2-17-35(G).

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.

[redacted]
Meghan Walker Dayson, Executive Director
State Ethics Commission

Dated this 19th day,
of September 2025.

Certificate of Service by Certified Mail

I hereby certify that a copy of this **NOTICE OF HEARING** was duly served on the RESPONDENT Take Back Our Republic, C/O John Pudner, 1110 West Wells Street, Ste. 1406, Milwaukee, WI 53233 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 19th day of September 2025, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.

[redacted]

Rachael O'Bryan, Administrative Assistant

Columbia, South Carolina — State Ethics Commission — (803) 253-4192

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
RECEIVED NOV 26 AM 11:01

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA COUNTY OF RICHLAND	)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF: COMPLAINT C2025-004	)	
State Ethics Commission, Complainant.	)	**CONSENT ORDER**
Take Back Our Republic, Respondent.	)	

This matter comes before the State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a Complaint filed on January 9, 2025. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the complaint against Take Back Our Republic (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. On June 25, 2021, Respondent registered as a Lobbyist's Principal (LP) for the 2021 calendar year. Within its registration, Respondent listed Anne L. Peterson as its lobbyist.
2. Respondent did not file a LP Disclosure Statement on or before January 31, 2022, for the period of June 25, 2021 through December 31, 2021.
3. On January 25, 2022, Peterson filed a Lobbyist's Disclosure Statement wherein she disclosed that Respondent paid her $3,500.00 for lobbying from June 25, 2021 to December 31, 2021.
4. In a February 3, 2023 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of its failure to file a January 31, 2022 LP Disclosure Statement. This letter was mailed to Respondent's address of record – 165 East Magnolia Avenue, Suite 203, Auburn, Alabama.
5. On May 23, 2023, a Notice to Cease and Desist Lobbying Activities was mailed to Respondent

at 165 East Magnolia Street, Suite 203, Auburn, Alabama.

6. On June 2, 2023, the United States Postal Service (USPS) returned the Commission's February 3, 2023 certified letter as "Not Deliverable As Addressed."

7. On June 27, 2023, the certified letter was remailed to 1110 West Wells Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin – the address listed on Respondent's website. The USPS subsequently returned this letter as "Return to Sender – No Such Number."

8. On July 10, 2023, the certified letter was remailed to 1110 West Wells Street, Suite 1406, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

9. On May 7, 2024, a Notice to Cease and Desist Lobbying Activities was mailed to Respondent at 1110 West Wells Street, Suite 1406, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This letter was signed for on May 13, 2024. However, the return receipt reads "C-19" and contains no recognizable signature.

10. Following the filing of the Complaint, Commission Investigator Timothy Plunkett located and contacted Respondent's former Executive Director John Pudner. Investigator Plunkett subsequently emailed a copy of the Complaint to Pudner, who advised that he did not receive the Commission's previous correspondence. Pudner informed Investigator Plunkett that Respondent essentially ceased to exist in or around December 2021, but indicated his willingness to file LP Disclosure Statement on Respondent's behalf.

11. On October 2, 2026, Respondent came into compliance by filing a January 31, 2022 LP Disclosure Statement for the period of June 25, 2021 through December 31, 2021. Therein, Respondent properly disclosed the $3,500.00 payment to Peterson.

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 Lobbyist's Principal pursuant to Section 2-17-10(14).

2. Section 2-17-35(A) provides, in relevant part:

> Except as otherwise provided by Section 2-17-90(E), each lobbyist's principal, no later than June thirtieth and January thirty-first of each year, must file a report with the State Ethics Commission covering that lobbyist's principal's expenditures attributable to lobbying during that filing period. The filing periods are from January first to May thirty-first for the June thirtieth report, and are from June first to December thirty-first for the January thirty-first report . . .

3. Section 2-17-50(A) provides, in relevant part:

> The State Ethics Commission shall: (1) require a person to submit information pursuant to the requirements of this chapter; (2) in addition to any other penalty in this chapter, require a person who files a late statement or fails to file a required statement to be assessed a civil penalty as follows: (a) a fine of one hundred dollars if not filed within ten days after the established deadline provided in this chapter; and (b) after notice has been given by certified or registered mail that a required statement 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 Section 2-17-35 for failing to file a January 31, 2022 LP Disclosure Statement. Through this Consent Order, Respondent acknowledges that it violated the Ethics Act by failing to timely file this report. In mitigation, Respondent states that it ceased to exist in or around December 2021 which meant the personnel responsible for filings were no longer employed by Respondent.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of one (1) count of Section 2-17-35.
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. In light of the mitigation described herein, particularly given that Respondent has ceased to exist and has now filed the necessary reports, the Commission declines to assess any late-filing penalties or administrative fees.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED THIS 28th DAY OF October 2026.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

[redacted]

Sara Parrish

[redacted]

JOHN PUDNER (for Respondent)
FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TAKE BACK OUR REPUBLIC

Oct 7, 2026
DATE

[redacted]

ALEXANDER C. LEMKE
RESPONDENT'S ATTORNEY

10-7-2026
DATE