

Official Use Only
Date Received:

Rev. 11/2025

C2026-024



STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
201 Executive Center Drive
Suite 150
Columbia, SC 29210
ETHICS ACT COMPLAINT FORM

Section 1. READ BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM:

Investigative Authority: The Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (the Act) gives the State Ethics Commission (Commission) the authority to investigate complaints against candidates, public officials, public members, public employees, at the state or local government level in South Carolina as well as lobbyists, and lobbyist's principals.

The Commission has the authority to investigate violations of Title 8, Chapter 13 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 2, Chapter 17 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, Title 59, Chapter 150 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, various provisions of Title 42, Chapter 3 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, and various provisions of Title 58, Chapter 3 of the South Carolina Code of Laws

Statute of Limitations: Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(9)(d) of the Act, the Commission cannot take action on a complaint more than four years after the violation is alleged to have occurred.

Blackout Period: Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(9)(b)(1) of the Act, no complaint may be accepted against a candidate for elective office during the fifty-day period before an election in which he is a candidate.

Please note that the Commission does not have the jurisdiction to investigate alleged violations of South Carolina's Freedom of Information Act, violations of the criminal code, instances of rude or discourteous treatment, federal officials, or violations of local ordinances, policies, or procedures.

Section 2. PROCEDURES FOR SUBMITTING A COMPLAINT:

Complaints must be submitted by mailing the original of a fully completed complaint form to the Commission at 201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150, Columbia, SC 29210. Failing to completely fill out the complaint form will result in the form being returned to you without an investigation being opened. Complaint forms must be either typed or written in clear, legible handwriting.

Both the Complainant and the Respondent have the right to be represented by legal counsel of their choosing. If either the complainant and/or the respondent chooses to be represented by legal counsel, they do so at their own expense.

Section 3. CONFIDENTIALITY:

Complaint forms become public documents if the Commission finds probable cause that a violation of law has occurred. Please note that upon receiving a properly filed complaint form, the Commission will share an unredacted copy of the complaint with the Respondent whether or not an investigation is ordered.

Section 4. COMPLAINT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Please check each circle to acknowledge that you have read and understand the following:

- ☒ I understand that I may be called to testify in an administrative or criminal proceeding should probable cause be found on this matter.
- ☒ I understand that I may be subpoenaed to sit for a deposition where I will be required to answer questions under oath.
- ☒ I understand that my name, address, and phone number will be shared with the Respondent.
- ☒ I understand that my name may be made public by the Respondent or the Commission.

Section 5. CHECK THE POSITION OF THE PERSON AGAINST WHOM THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED:

- ☐ Candidate for public office
- ☒ Elected official at the state or local level
- ☐ Employee of local or state government
- ☐ Lobbyist
- ☐ Lobbyist's Principal
- ☐ Member of South Carolina Legislature
- ☐ Public member (a person appointed to a part-time board, commission, or council at the state or local level)

Section 6. COMPLAINANT AND RESPONDENT INFORMATION:

I. PERSON BRINGING THE COMPLAINT (COMPLAINANT)			
Name:	State Ethics Commission		
Address:	201 Executive Center Drive, Suite 150		
City:	Columbia	State: SC	Zip Code: 29210
Telephone	(803) 253-4192	Email Address:	
II. PERSON AGAINST WHOM COMPLAINT IS BROUGHT (RESPONDENT)			
Name:	Russell B. Tysl		
Address:	[REDACTED]		
City:	[REDACTED]	State: SC	Zip Code: [REDACTED]
Telephone	[REDACTED]		

Section 7. THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS COMPLAINT COMES FROM:

- ☒ Personal knowledge
- ☐ Media Reports
- ☐ From a third-party
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Please specify: _____

Section 8: STATEMENT OF FACTS (Please state the actions of the Respondent upon which your ethics complaint is based):

Section 8-13-1120, SC Code Ann., 1976, as amended, requires disclosure of the source, type, and amount of income from a governmental entity and a listing of the private source and type of any income received by the filer or a member of the filer's immediate family during the reporting period. Respondent failed to properly report personal income from Anderson County School District 2 on the 2024 and 2025 Statements of Economic Interests. It was reported as private income but must be disclosed as income from a SC Governmental Entity. In addition, he failed to properly report the source of family members' income on the 2024 and 2025 Statements of Economic Interests.

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. As a City of Belton Councilman, records of the State Ethics Commission indicate that a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between July 24, 2024 and July 29, 2024 for the August 12, 2024 election, and a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure was due between October 15, 2025 and October 20, 2025 for the November 4, 2025 election.

Respondent was reminded of the 2024 Pre-Election filing requirement by letters dated March 19, 2025 and May 1, 2025 as described in the attached. To date, a properly completed Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure for the August 12, 2024 election, Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure for the November 4, 2025 election, and properly amended 2024 and 2025 Statement of Economic Interests have 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.

Section 9. VERIFICATION BY OATH OR AFFIRMATION - ORIGINAL NOTARY AND SIGNATURES REQUIRED:

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF RICHLAND

Personally appeared before me Meghan Walker Dayson who, first being duly sworn, says that he 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 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
6th day of April, 2026


Meghan Walker Dayson
Executive Director



Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires March 14, 2033

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND	)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
	)	
IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
	)	
Complaint C2026-024	)	
	)	
State Ethics Commission	)	NOTICE OF HEARING
Complainant.	)	
	)	
Russell B. Tysl	)	
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 20, 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 allegations will be heard:

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

Russell B. Tysl, candidate for Belton City Council, failed to file a 2024 Pre-Election Disclosure Report, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A).

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¹ In addition to the charges listed herein, the Commission found probable cause existed to charge Respondent with one (1) count of Section 8-13-1120 for failing to properly disclose income on his 2024 and 2025 Statements of Economic Interests. However, pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i), the Commission waived further proceedings as to this charge.

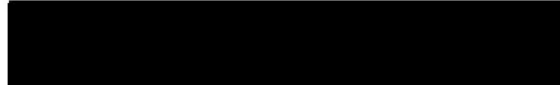
COUNT TWO
FAILURE TO FILE PRE-ELECTION CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE REPORT
SECTION 8-13-1308(A), S.C. CODE ANN., 1976, AS AMENDED

Russell B. Tysl, candidate for Belton City Council, failed to file a 2025 Pre- Election Campaign Disclosure Report, 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 2026


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 RESPONDENT Russell B. Tysl, 310 Brown Avenue, Belton, SC 29627 by depositing said **NOTICE OF HEARING** in the United States mail, Columbia, South Carolina on this 22 day of May 2026, by CERTIFIED MAIL, E-RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, appropriate postage affixed, and a return address clearly indicated on said envelope.



Maquita S. Kessler, Paralegal
State Ethics Commission

Columbia, South Carolina

(803) 253-4192

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA	)	
COUNTY OF RICHLAND	)	BEFORE THE STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
	)	
IN THE MATTER OF:	)	
COMPLAINT C2026-024	)	
	)	
State Ethics Commission,	)	CONSENT ORDER
Complainant,	)	
	)	
Russell B Tysl,	)	
Respondent.	)	
	)	

This matter comes before the South Carolina State Ethics Commission (Commission) by way of a complaint filed on April 6, 2026. Pursuant to Section 8-13-320(10)(i) of the South Carolina Ethics, Government Accountability, and Campaign Reform Act (Ethics Act), the Complaint against Russell B. Tysl (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 a successful candidate for Belton City Council in an August 13, 2024 special election and a November 4, 2025 general election.
2. Respondent did not file a Pre-Election Campaign Disclosure Report (CDR) prior to the August 13, 2024 special election or the November 4, 2025 general election.
3. In a March 19, 2025 certified letter, the Commission notified Respondent of his failure to file the 2024 Pre-Election CDR.¹
4. On April 28, 2025, the certified letter was returned to the Commission as unclaimed.

¹ The March 19, 2025 letter did not address Respondent's failure to file the 2025 Pre-Election CDR because the filing deadline for that report had not yet passed.

In addition to the 2024 Pre-Election CDR, the March 19, 2025 letter also assessed a \$100.00 late-filing penalty for Respondent's 2024 Statement of Economic Interests (SEI), which was due by August 15, 2026 (when Respondent took the oath of office), but was not filed until September 18, 2024. In a subsequent letter dated March 24, 2026, the Commission also assessed a \$100.00 late-filing penalty for Respondent's 2025 SEI, which was due by March 30, 2025, but was not filed until May 6, 2025. These SEIs are not part of the present Complaint.

5. On May 1, 2025, the Commission re-mailed the certified letter via first-class mail with a tracking number.
6. According to the United States Postal Service (USPS), the first-class letter was delivered to Respondent's address of record on May 6, 2025. However, no signature accompanied the proof of service.
7. The Complaint was filed and mailed to Respondent on April 6, 2026.
8. On April 14, 2026, Respondent received the Complaint. The same day, Respondent filed the 2024 Pre-Election CDR disclosing only a \$25.00 filing fee.
9. Respondent subsequently spoke to Commission Investigator Kevin Hinson, who explained the complaint process and filing requirements.
10. On May 12, 2026, Respondent filed the 2025 Pre-Election CDR disclosing only a \$25.00 filing fee.

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, as defined by Section 8-13-100(27).
Therefore, the Commission has personal and subject matter jurisdiction.
2. Respondent failed to file a 2024 Pre-Election CDR and a 2025 Pre-Election CDR, in violation of Section 8-13-1308(A), which 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:

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; 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 two (2) counts of Section 8-13-1308(A) for failing to timely file the 2024 and 2025 Pre-Election CDRs.² Through this Consent Order, Respondent admits that he violated Section 8-13-1308(A) as charged. In mitigation, Respondent states that 2024 was his first run for public office. Respondent further states that he does not recall receiving the Commission’s correspondence on May 6, 2025. However, Respondent states it is possible that he received the letter and failed to open it. Respondent states that he is a high school teacher and basketball coach in Anderson County School District Two. Respondent states that the end of the school year is an especially hectic time for teachers and he apologizes if he failed to respond. The Commission notes that although USPS indicates the letter was delivered to Respondent’s address, no signature accompanied the return receipt. The Commission also notes that Respondent took corrective action promptly after receiving the Complaint and speaking with Investigator Hinson.

DISPOSITION

1. The Commission hereby finds Respondent in violation of two (2) counts 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.

THEREFORE, the Commission hereby issues this Public Reprimand to Respondent for

² The Commission also found probable cause to charge Respondent with one (1) count of Section 8-13-1120 for failing to properly disclose income on his 2024 and 2025 SEIs. However, the Commission waived further proceedings as to this charge.

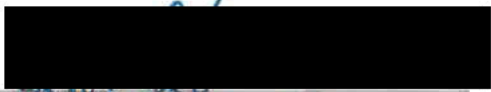
violation of the Ethics Act;

AND orders Respondent to pay to the Commission, within six (6) months from his receipt of this Order, a late-filing penalty of \$200.00 (\$100.00 for each Pre-Election CDR) and an administrative fee of \$500.00, for a total of \$700.00. The Commission declines to assess accrued late-filing penalties in accordance with Section 8-13-1550 given the uncertainty surrounding Respondent's receipt of the Commission's March 19, 2025 correspondence.

By executing this Consent Order, Respondent understands that he is not only admitting to violations of the Act but also confessing to a judgment of \$1,000.00 (the amounts agreed upon herein plus an additional \$300.00 administrative fee to cover costs associated with filing a judgment) (less any money paid to the Commission) if he does not make full and timely payment as provided in this Order. In that event, the Commission shall file a Judgment against Respondent in the County of Respondent's last known residence. Upon said filing, the Clerk of Court shall enter this Order in the amount of \$1,000.00 (less any money paid to the Commission) in its Judgment Rolls, without cost to the Commission.

AND IT IS ORDERED THIS 12th DAY OF August 2026.

STATE ETHICS COMMISSION


SARA PARRISH, VICE CHAIR


RUSSELL B. TYSL
RESPONDENT