

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION**

In the Matter of a Complaint by  
Christopher Brechlin, Wethersfield

File No. 2022-041

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The complainant, Christopher Brechlin, filed this complaint pursuant to General Statutes § 9-7b. The complainant alleges that the candidate committee Timbro for Wethersfield failed to disclose and pay for expenditures associated with a professionally produced five-minute video announcing the candidacy of Brianna Timbro, a 2022 candidate for State Representative in Connecticut's 28<sup>th</sup> General Assembly District. The complaint raised questions as to whether the video was paid out of the candidate's personal funds, or if the video was produced by a business with which the candidate is affiliated or if the production was an impermissible in-kind contribution by a business entity.

After an investigation of the complaint, the Commission adopts the following findings of fact and conclusions of law:

1. On January 27, 2022, the Respondent, Brianna Timbro (the "candidate"), registered her candidate committee, Timbro for Wethersfield (the "committee"), by filing SEEC Form 1 with the Commission. In that registration Kevin Timbro and Cheryl Menard were named as treasurer and deputy treasurer for the committee respectively.<sup>1</sup>
2. The candidate, the treasurer, and the deputy treasurer, agreed to participate in the Citizens' Election Program ("CEP") and acknowledged their acceptance of the program rules when they signed and filed the SEEC Form CEP 10.<sup>2</sup> The committee applied for a grant from the Citizens' Election Fund and again the candidate, treasurer, and deputy treasurer agreed to additional restrictions on qualified committees.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Registration by candidate—SEEC Form 1 Timbro for Wethersfield (January 27, 2022) (establishing candidate committee for Brianna Timbro for the 28<sup>th</sup> district state representative seat).

<sup>2</sup> See Affidavit of Intent to Abide by Expenditure Limits and Other Citizens' Election Program Requirements—SEEC Form CEP 10—Timbro for Wethersfield (June 27, 2022) (reflecting agreement of candidate, treasurer and deputy treasurer to statutory and regulatory rules governing the Citizens' Election Program).

<sup>3</sup> See Citizens' Election Program Application for Public Grant Dollars—SEEC Form CEP 15—Timbro for Wethersfield (June 28, 2022) (showing acceptance by candidate, treasurer, and deputy treasurer of additional restrictions on candidate committee's use of funds provided through Citizens' Election Program).

3. On April 12, 2022, the committee posted a video and picture of the candidate announcing her candidacy on its Facebook page and Instagram account respectively. The complaint alleges that the video shows the “candidate in a recording studio that includes professional lighting and photography backdrop” and that the picture posted “depict[ed] some of the professional equipment used in the making of the video.”
4. On June 28, 2022, the committee filed its financial disclosures for the period April 1 to June 27, 2022. The disclosures filed did not report any expenditure related to the video announcing Brianna Timbro’s candidacy. Neither did the disclosure report any expenses as incurred during that period but not paid relating to the video. On that same date the committee filed its CEP grant application.
5. This complaint was filed on August 19, 2022, while the committee’s CEP grant application was pending.
6. Because the complaint was filed while the committee’s grant application was pending, the Commission initiated a validation process on August 24, 2022, to determine whether the allegations in the complaint indicated that the committee was out of compliance with program requirements pursuant to which a CEP grant may be awarded.
7. During the validation staff spoke with the treasurer, Kevin Timbro, and his brother, Jordan Timbro, the owner of the professional equipment used in the video. The validation revealed that Jordan Timbro did not take the video but instead provided the professional equipment used and that the candidate made the video herself. Jordan Timbro did, however, spend about half an hour editing the video. He further stated that the video required an unusually small amount of editing because the candidate had done a good job making the video.
8. During the validation, the treasurer stated that Jordan Timbro does videography as a hobby and was acting as a volunteer for the campaign using his own equipment. The committee claimed that the costs associated with making the video were “*de minimis*” and thus were not a contribution and disclosure was not required.
9. The validation, however, revealed that Jordan Timbro owns a business, Jordan Timbro LLC, that provides video production services. Jordan Timbro stated that he purchased the equipment used in the video in 2016, which was before he opened his video production business in 2018. The treasurer stated that Jordan Timbro no longer runs the video production business and is now running a gym. However, neither the treasurer nor Jordan Timbro was able to provide any documentation supporting those claims.

10. In order to remove any doubt that the committee had accepted only potentially qualifying contributions and had not benefitted from any other impermissible contributions, the committee decided to disgorge an amount of money approximate to what Jordan Timbro would have charged a client for a similar service.
11. Jordan Timbro provided a sample invoice to the Commission detailing the cost of what he would charge for similar services. The invoice detailed, *inter alia*, service charges for a videography half day rate at \$300 and two 1-2-minute highlight video clips at \$300. Investigations by Commission staff revealed that costs of similar services and documentation provided by Jordan Timbro were reasonable.
12. The committee assessed the fair market value for the video edit and use of professional equipment by the candidate committee to be \$450 or less. In order to remove any doubt that they were fully in compliance with the rules related to the CEP, the committee forfeited to the Citizens' Election Fund \$450 on September 21, 2022, which represented the estimated fair market value of using the professional equipment and video editing.
13. The committee's Citizens' Election Program grant application was delayed by approximately four weeks due to the validation process. Once the potential impermissible in-kind business contribution was rectified, the committee received a grant from the Citizens' Election Fund in the amount of \$33,175 on September 29, 2022.
14. General Statutes § 9-606<sup>4</sup> requires the treasurer of a candidate committee to report all expenditures that the committee makes. Expenditure in turn means "anything of value, when made for the purpose of . . . influencing the . . . election, of any person . . ." General Statutes § 9-601b. General Statutes § 9-613 (a)<sup>5</sup> prohibits a business entity from making any contributions to a committee.
15. The Commission finds that the committee received the benefit of using professional equipment to make a campaign video and video editing services from Jordan Timbro. It also appears that the equipment used to make and edit the video may have been owned by a business entity, Jordan Timbro LLC.

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<sup>4</sup> General Statutes § 9-606 (a) in relevant part provides that: "(a) The treasurer of each committee shall be responsible for . . . *reporting all contributions* and other funds in the manner specified in section 9-608, (2) *making and reporting expenditures*, (3) *reporting expenses incurred but not yet paid*, (4) filing the statements required under section 9-608, and (5) keeping internal records of each entry made on such statements. The treasurer of each committee shall deposit contributions in the committee's designated depository not later than twenty days after receiving them."

<sup>5</sup> General Statutes § 9-613 (a) in relevant part provides that: "No business entity shall make any contributions or expenditures to, or for the benefit of, any candidate's campaign for election to any public office or position subject to this chapter . . ."

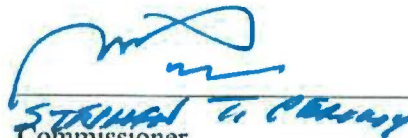
16. Accepting the video editing services and use of professional equipment from a business without paying the fair market value for those services would have resulted in an impermissible in-kind contribution by a business entity to the committee pursuant to General Statutes § 9-613.
17. However, the disgorgement check of \$450 made to the Citizens' Election Fund prevented the committee from the benefit of using the professional equipment and receiving video editing services without paying for them. The committee therefore came back into compliance with the CEP requirements.
18. The committee was selected as part of the Commission's post-election review process for the 2022 election cycle and that review is pending.
19. Given that the committee rectified the potential business entity contribution that could have resulted, and did not receive any financial benefit from using the professional equipment and receipt of video editing services, and willingly came back into compliance, the Commission will not take any further action in this matter.

**ORDER**

The following Order is issued on the basis of the aforementioned findings:

The Commission will take no further action on this matter.

Adopted this 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023 at Hartford, Connecticut by vote of the Commission.

  
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Stephen A. Chasney  
Commissioner  
By Order of the Commission