

Andrea Gyger

From: [REDACTED] on behalf of Atlee Breland
[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, December 11, 2011 1:04 PM
To: Andrea Gyger
Subject: 8 CCR 1505-6
Categories: Rules

Dear Ms. Gyger and Secretary Gessler:

I'm writing you from Mississippi to express my support for reform of your campaign finance laws. Although I am not a Colorado resident, I anticipate that my political action committee, Parents Against Personhood, will be campaigning against the proposed 2012 personhood ballot initiative, and that we will therefore be required to file the appropriate campaign finance paperwork.

I'd like to tell you how my PAC came into existence, because I think it clearly illustrates the problem with the laws in question. Three months ago, I was not a political activist of any sort, and had never participated in politics beyond voting regularly. However, I am a mother thanks to infertility treatment, and when Mississippi's personhood amendment, Initiative 26, was cleared for the ballot, I decided to set up a website to help people understand how Initiative 26 would affect IVF. I didn't intend to run advertising or do any form of campaigning. All I wanted was to set up a FAQ and a blog where I could discuss the scientific and medical issues involved, from a layperson's standpoint.

Mississippi's campaign finance laws are similar to Colorado's in that any expenditure or donation of \$200 or more must be reported to the Secretary of State's office. A call to the Secretary of State's office revealed that this includes in-kind contributions as well. Because I am a computer programmer by profession, the time I spent creating the website was considered a campaign contribution, and had to be valued at my normal hourly rates. I was forced to become a political action committee because I spent literally two hours setting up a personal blog.

While I did ultimately decide to engage in traditional campaigning and fundraising, this was absolutely not my intention when I started my website. I just wanted to engage in constitutionally-protected speech, by writing articles about a subject of great personal importance to me, with no monetary involvement whatsoever. I was honestly shocked to discover that I couldn't do this without filing monthly reports, submitted under my name and published as a matter of public record, in connection with a highly sensitive political issue.

Mississippi's absurdly restrictive campaign finance laws are currently being challenged on First Amendment grounds by another group of citizens who found themselves required to file PAC paperwork for the most trivial expenditures. I wholly support the plaintiffs of that lawsuit, and encourage Colorado to reform its campaign finance laws to be less burdensome for ordinary people like myself who just want to engage in the most basic form of free speech.

Thank you,
Atlee Breland