

Andrea Gyger

From: Becky Fuller [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, December 20, 2011 9:49 AM
To: Andrea Gyger
Subject: Campaign Finance Reform c

Dear Ms. Gyger,

I hope that I am not too late to have my comments included.

I am very appreciative of Secretary Gessler's interest in simplifying campaign finance rules. I have been a volunteer treasurer on a few campaigns and had the experience of making a mistake and costing my candidate nearly \$1,000 in a race that raised in the neighborhood of \$34,000.

My opinion is that fines for what most would deem "rookie mistakes" are an important issue in general. The campaign finance rules appear to have evolved to the point that candidates will need to hire "Campaign CPAs" to file forms or face the real risk of excessive fines.

The sheer cost (and arguably need) to hire a professional reporting service will increase the cost of running for local office. The risk of making a costly mistake that hurts the candidate they are trying to help will spook volunteers (like me) from stepping up to leadership roles on campaigns. It is hard work to raise campaign funds and it really (still) bothers me that my mistake cost the my candidate's campaign nearly \$1,000, especially when the mistake was unintentional and did not harm my candidate's opponent or the public.

The fine in the campaign was for failure to report a major contribution received (\$1,000) within 30 days of an election. In our case, the major contributions were received before an uncontested primary election. We were unsuccessful in our request for a waiver or reduction of the penalty.

What is sad is that my candidate's opponent also was assessed a major contributor fine. Theirs was assessed in the time period before the general election. Their fine was larger than ours and I am of the belief that their reporting error also did not harm my candidate's campaign or the public. They were also unsuccessful in their request for a waiver or reduction of the penalty.

Assessment and ultimately payment of these fines by both candidates did not benefit the public or the process.

I have asked and have been told based upon current law, these fines could not be reduced or waived. However, I was told that the law with regard to this specific issue could be changed to provide the opportunity to reduce or eliminate penalties. Philosophically, I believe paid professional campaign treasurers who should know better and willful violators of campaign finance laws should be punished with fines with limited reduction or waiver of fines. Ideally, volunteer treasurers should be given a little more discretion along the lines of one strike and you're out...

On another note, I am pleased to read that campaign finance training is being offered more often. However, I would encourage the Secretary of State's office to coordinate with County Clerks and Recorders to offer training in locations outside of Denver or to offer it as a webinar. I live in Colorado Springs and the long round trip commute makes attending a Denver based training a burdensome time commitment.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Becky Fuller
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