

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF
STEVEN GLEN MILLS,
RESPONDENT

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BEFORE THE
TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION
SC-200528

ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION

I. Recitals

The Texas Ethics Commission (the commission) met on June 16, 2000, and voted to accept jurisdiction of Sworn Complaint SC-200528 filed against Steven Glenn Mills, Respondent. The commission met again on July 14, 2000, to consider Sworn Complaint SC-200528. A quorum of the commission was present at both meetings. Based on the investigation conducted by commission staff, the commission determined that there is credible evidence of a violation of Section 255.006, Election Code, a law administered and enforced by the commission. To resolve and settle this complaint without further proceedings, the commission proposes this agreed resolution to the respondent.

II. Allegations

The complainant alleges that the respondent did not use the word “for” on his political signs, newspaper advertisements, or brochures to disclose that the respondent did not hold the office he sought.

III. Facts Supported by Credible Evidence

Credible evidence available to the commission supports the following findings of fact:

1. At all times relevant to this complaint, the respondent was a candidate for city council in the May 6, 2000, city election. The respondent was successful in the city council election.
2. The complainant submitted a brochure and newspaper advertisements that support the respondent’s candidacy and that state: “Your Voice on the Mansfield City Council!” He also submitted photographs of signs that state: “Steve Mills City Council Place 5”.
3. The respondent filed a sworn response in which he states that this is his first attempt at public office and that he tried to understand and follow all election laws. The respondent also

swears that: “Leaving the word “for” out of some of my advertising was a true oversight. I regret I left that word out of some of my advertising. However, I never ever held myself out to be anything other than a candidate.”

IV. Findings and Conclusions of Law

The facts described in Section III support the following findings and conclusions of law:

1. A person commits an offense if the person knowingly represents in a campaign communication that a candidate holds a public office that the candidate does not hold at the time the representation is made. For purposes of this prohibition, a person represents that a candidate holds a public office that the candidate does not hold if:
 - (1) the candidate does not hold the office that the candidate seeks; and
 - (2) the political advertising or campaign communication states the public office sought but does not include the word “for” in a type size that is at least one-half the type size used for the name of the office to clarify that the candidate does not hold that office. Section 255.006, Election Code.
2. “Campaign communication” is defined in relevant part as a written communication relating to a campaign for election to public office. The brochure, newspaper advertisements, and signs constitute campaign communications because they are written communications relating to a campaign for election to public office.
3. The respondent’s brochure, newspaper advertisements, and signs neglected to use the word “for” in connection with the position sought, and thus there is credible evidence that the respondent violated Section 255.006, Election Code.

V. Representations and Agreement by Respondent

By signing this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION and returning it to the commission:

1. The respondent neither admits nor denies the facts described under Section III and the commission's findings and conclusions of law described under Section IV, and consents to the entry of this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION solely for the purpose of resolving and settling this sworn complaint.
2. The respondent consents to the entry of this Order before any adversarial evidentiary hearings or argument before the commission, and before any formal adjudication of law or fact by the commission. The respondent waives any right to a hearing before the commission or an

administrative law judge, and further waives any right to a post-hearing procedure established or provided by law.

3. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION, the respondent understands and agrees that the commission will consider the respondent to have committed the violation described under Section IV, Paragraph 3, if it is necessary to consider a sanction to be assessed in any future sworn complaint proceedings against the respondent.

VI. Confidentiality

This ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION describes a violation that the commission has determined is neither technical nor *de minimis*. Accordingly, this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION is not confidential under Section 571.140, Government Code, and may be disclosed by members and staff of the commission.

VII. Sanction

After considering the seriousness of the violation described under Sections III and IV, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the violation, after considering the fact that no previous violations by this respondent are known to the commission, and after considering the sanction necessary to deter future violations, the commission imposes no civil penalty for the violation described under Section IV, Paragraph 3.

VIII. Order

The commission hereby ORDERS:

1. that this proposed AGREED RESOLUTION be presented to the respondent;
2. that if the respondent consents to the proposed AGREED RESOLUTION, this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION is a final and complete resolution of SC-200528;
3. that the respondent may consent to the proposed AGREED RESOLUTION only by signing an original of this document and mailing the signed original to the Texas Ethics Commission, P.O. Box 12070, Austin, Texas 78711, no later than August 11, 2000; and
4. that the executive director shall promptly refer SC-200528 to either the commission or to an administrative law judge to conduct hearings on the commission's behalf and to propose findings of fact and conclusions of law to the commission in accordance with law if the

respondent does not agree to the resolution of SC-200528 as proposed in this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION.

AGREED to by the respondent on this _____ day of _____, 2000.

Steven Glen Mills, Respondent

EXECUTED ORIGINAL received by the commission on: _____.

Texas Ethics Commission

By: _____
Tom Harrison, Executive Director