

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF
VICTORIA FRAYSER,
RESPONDENT

§
§
§
§
§

BEFORE THE
TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION
SC-201070

ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION

I. Recitals

The Texas Ethics Commission (the commission) met on November 10, 2000, and voted to accept jurisdiction of Sworn Complaint SC-201070 filed against Victoria Frayser, Respondent. The commission met again on April 6, 2001, to consider Sworn Complaint SC-201070. 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, a candidate for state representative, represented that she held an office that she did not hold by failing to include the word “for” in political advertising.

III. Facts Supported by Credible Evidence

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

1. The respondent was a candidate for state representative in the November 7, 2000, general election. The respondent did not hold the office that she was seeking.
2. The complainant submitted with this complaint copies of two fliers that supported the respondent’s candidacy and one homeowners’ association newsletter that contained an advertisement that also supported the respondent’s candidacy. The three documents at issue include a headline that states “Vote Victory Vote Victoria Frayser State District 138.” At the bottom of each document is a political advertising disclosure statement that states “Pol. Ad. Paid for by Victoria Frayser for State Representative” followed by the name of a campaign treasurer and an address.

IV. Findings and Conclusions of Law

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

1. A person may not knowingly represent in a campaign communication that a candidate holds a public office the candidate does not hold at the time the representation is made. Section 255.006(b), Election Code. A person represents that a candidate holds a public office the candidate does not hold if: (1) the candidate does not hold the office that the candidate seeks; and (2) the campaign communication states the public office sought but does not use 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(c), Election Code.
2. A campaign communication is defined, in relevant part, as a written communication relating to a campaign for election to public office. Section 251.001(17), Election Code.
3. The documents submitted with this complaint constitute campaign communications because they are written communications relating to the respondent’s campaign for election to the office of state representative.
4. The headlines of the communications state the respondent’s name and the office that she is seeking, but do not include the word “for” to clarify that the respondent did not hold that office. The political advertising disclosure statement states that the advertisements were paid for by the respondent’s campaign, and thus there is credible evidence that the political advertisements/campaign communications were made by the respondent. Therefore, 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 4, 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. No 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 4.

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-201070;
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 May 4, 2001; and
4. that the executive director shall promptly refer SC-201070 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-201070 as proposed in this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION.

AGREED to by the respondent on this _____ day of _____, 200__.

Victoria Frayser, Respondent

EXECUTED ORIGINAL received by the commission on: _____.

Texas Ethics Commission

By: _____
Tom Harrison, Executive Director