

**STATE OF MINNESOTA
CAMPAIGN FINANCE AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE BOARD**

Findings in the Matter of the 15th Senate District DFL Committee

Summary of the Facts

Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Section 10A.27, subdivision 13(a), candidates, political party units, and political committees registered with the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board (the Board) may not accept a contribution in excess of \$100 from an association that is not registered with the Board unless the contribution is accompanied by financial disclosure of the donating association's receipts and expenditures in the form specified by statute.

In response to an inquiry from the Board regarding contributions disclosed on the 2007 year-end Report of Receipts and Expenditures, Joanne Weisz, treasurer, 15th Senate District DFL Committee ("the Committee") confirmed that the Committee accepted \$700 from the Mike Ciresi for U.S. Senate Committee, \$150 from Jim Cohen for U.S. Senate Committee and \$400 from Tinklenberg for Congress Committee, without the required disclosure. The Mike Ciresi for U.S. Senate Committee, Jim Cohen for U.S. Senate Committee, and Tinklenberg for Congress Committee are associations not registered with the Board.

In a letter dated March 15, 2008, Ms. Weisz stated, "We did not know we had accepted contributions from unregistered associations and we apologize for any violation. It was an inadvertent error on our part; we were not aware of the statute pertaining to these types of contributions...we are taking steps to ensure that this error is not repeated..."

This matter was considered by the Board in executive session on May 16, 2008. The Board's decision was based upon correspondence from Ms. Weisz and Board records.

Based on the above Summary of the Facts and Relevant Statutes, the Board makes the following:

Finding Concerning Probable Cause

1. There is probable cause to believe that the 15th Senate District DFL Committee violated Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.27, subdivision 13(a), when it accepted contributions in excess of \$100 from the Mike Ciresi for U.S. Senate Committee, the Jim Cohen for U.S. Senate Committee, and the Tinklenberg for Congress Committee, associations not registered with the Board, without receiving the required disclosure.
2. There is probable cause to believe that the contributions were not returned within 60 days as permitted in Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.15, subdivision 3.
3. There is no probable cause to believe that this violation was intentional or done with the intent to circumvent the requirements of Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 10A.

Relevant Statutes

10A.27, subdivision 13. Unregistered association limit; statement; penalty. (a) The treasurer of a political committee, political fund, principal campaign committee, or party unit must not accept a contribution of more than \$100 from an association not registered under this chapter unless the contribution is accompanied by a written statement that meets the disclosure and reporting period requirements imposed by section 10A.20. This statement must be certified as true and correct by an officer of the contributing association. The committee, fund, or party unit that accepts the contribution must include a copy of the statement with the report that discloses the contribution to the board. This subdivision does not apply when a national political party contributes money to its affiliate in this state.

(b) An unregistered association may provide the written statement required by this subdivision to no more than three committees, funds, or party units in a calendar year. Each statement must cover at least the 30 days immediately preceding and including the date on which the contribution was made. An unregistered association or an officer of it is subject to a civil penalty imposed by the board of up to \$1,000, if the association or its officer:

(1) fails to provide a written statement as required by this subdivision; or

(2) fails to register after giving the written statement required by this subdivision to more than three committees, funds, or party units in a calendar year.

(c) The treasurer of a political committee, political fund, principal campaign committee, or party unit who accepts a contribution in excess of \$100 from an unregistered association without the required written disclosure statement is subject to a civil penalty up to four times the amount in excess of \$100.