

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

**Findings in the Matter of the Acceptance of a
Prohibited Contribution During The 2006 Legislative Session
By the Paul Hardt for House Committee**

Summary of the Allegations and Responses

In response to an inquiry from the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board (“the Board”) Erik Starkman, treasurer, of the Paul Hardt for House Committee confirmed in a letter dated October 5, 2006, that the Committee accepted a contribution on March 15, 2006, from the Southern Dakota County Labor Council COPE Fund, a political fund registered with the Board. The regular 2006 Legislative Session was held from March 1 to May 21, 2006.

Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.273, subdivision 1, prohibits candidates from soliciting or accepting a contribution from a political committee or political fund during a regular legislative session. A candidate who violates this section is subject to a civil penalty imposed by the board of up to \$1,000.

Mr. Starkman states, “This was inadvertently accepted during the legislative session. We were unaware we were in violation of Minnesota statute 10A.273.”

This matter was considered by the Board in executive session on October 17, 2006.

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

Finding Concerning Probable Cause

There is evidence that the Paul Hardt for House Committee accepted a \$500 contribution from the Southern Dakota County Labor Council COPE Fund during the 2006 regular legislative session. The Board finds probable cause to believe that the Committee inadvertently violated Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.273, subdivision 1.

**Based on the above Finding Concerning Probable Cause, the Board issues the following:
ORDER**

1. For accepting a contribution from the South Dakota County Labor Council COPE Fund during the 2006 legislative session the Board orders the Paul Hardt for House Committee to pay a civil penalty of \$500, which is one times the amount of the contribution.
2. The Board directs the Paul Hardt for House Committee to return \$500 to the Southern Dakota County Labor Council COPE Fund and forward to the Board a copy of the letter and check returning the contribution.

3. The Paul Hardt for House Committee is directed to send to the Board payment of the civil penalty and a copy of the check and letter returning the contribution within thirty days of receipt of this order.
4. If the Paul Hardt for House Committee does not comply with the provisions of this order, the Board's Executive Director shall refer this matter to the Ramsey County Attorney for civil enforcement pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.273.
5. The Board investigation of this matter is entered into the public record in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.02, subdivision 11, and upon payment by the Paul Hardt for House Committee of the civil fine imposed herein, the matter is concluded.

Dated: October 17, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Milbert", is written above a solid horizontal line.

Bob Milbert, Chair
Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board

Relevant Statutes

Minnesota Statutes, section 10A.273, subdivision 1. **Contributions during legislative session.**

(a) A candidate for the legislature or for constitutional office, the candidate's principal campaign committee, or a political committee or party unit established by all or a part of the party organization within a house of the legislature, must not solicit or accept a contribution from a registered lobbyist, political committee, political fund, or dissolving principal campaign committee, or from a party unit established by the party organization within a house of the legislature, during a regular session of the legislature.