1	FEDERAL EL	LECTION COMMISSION	
2	FIRST GENER	AL COUNSEL'S REPORT	
4 5 6 7 8 9		AR 23-02 DATE REFERRED: DATE OF NOTIFICATION DATE OF RESPONSE: DATE ACTIVATED:	Mar. 9, 2023 Mar. 10, 2023 Mar. 21, 2023 June 1, 2023
10 11 12 13 14		ELECTION CYCLE: EXPIRATION OF SOL:	2020 Apr. 28, 2024 (earliest Jan. 31, 2026 (latest)
15	SOURCE:	Audit Referral	
16 17 18 19	RESPONDENT:	Sheila Jackson Lee for Cong Karen Y. Grays in her offic	
20 21 22 23 24 25 26	RELEVANT STATUTES AND REGULATIONS:	52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a) 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 11 C.F.R. § 114.2	
27 28 29	INTERNAL REPORTS CHECKED:	Disclosure Reports Audit Reports	
30 31	FEDERAL AGENCIES CHECKED:	None	
32	I. INTRODUCTION		
33 34	This matter arises from an audit of	the 2019-2020 election cycle ac	ctivity of Sheila
35	Jackson Lee for Congress and Karen Y. Gr	rays in her official capacity as t	reasurer (the
36	"Committee"). On March 9, 2023, the Aud	dit Division referred the Comm	ittee to the Office of
37	General Counsel ("OGC") for misstating it	ts 2020 calendar year receipts; 1	receiving excessive
38	contributions in 2019 and 2020; and receiv	ving prohibited corporate contri	butions in 2019 and
39	2020, in violation of the Federal Election C	Campaign Act of 1971, as amen	nded (the "Act"). The
40	Committee acknowledges both the misrepo	orting and acceptance of excess	ive and prohibited

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- 1 corporate contributions but asserts that it has materially corrected the relevant reports, refunded
- 2 the excessive and prohibited contributions, and spent considerable resources to improve its
- 3 compliance procedures.
- For the reasons set forth below, we recommend that the Commission: (1) open a Matter
- 5 Under Review ("MUR"); (2) find reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C.
- 6 § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by misstating its receipts; (3) find reason to believe that the
- 7 Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by knowingly accepting
- 8 excessive contributions; (4) find reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C.
- 9 § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. § 114.2 by knowingly accepting prohibited corporate contributions;
- and (5) authorize pre-probable cause conciliation with the Committee.

### 11 II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 12 The Committee is the principal campaign committee of U.S. Representative Sheila
- 13 Jackson Lee; Karen Y. Grays is its treasurer.<sup>1</sup>
- On April 28, 2021, the Audit Division notified the Committee that it would be the subject
- of a Commission audit of its 2019-2020 election cycle activity.<sup>2</sup> On January 18, 2023, the
- 16 Commission approved the Audit Division's Recommendation Memorandum.<sup>3</sup> On March 6,
- 17 2023, the Commission approved an edited Proposed Final Audit Report.<sup>4</sup> The Commission-
- approved Final Audit Report found that the Committee misstated its financial activity, received

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress, Statement of Organization (Oct. 2, 2018), <a href="https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/296/201810029124272296/201810029124272296.pdf">https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/296/201810029124272296/201810029124272296.pdf</a>.

Letter from Dayna C. Brown, Acting Assistant Staff Director Audit Division, FEC, to Karen Y. Grays, Treasurer, Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress (Apr. 28, 2021) ("Audit Notification").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Certification ("Cert.") (Jan. 18, 2023), A21-05 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cert. (Mar. 6, 2023), A21-05 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) (approving Proposed Final Audit Report for the Committee, subject to edits circulated by Commissioner Cooksey's office).

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- 1 excessive contributions totaling \$129,600, and received prohibited corporate contributions
- 2 totaling \$10,450.<sup>5</sup> The Final Audit Report noted that the Committee untimely resolved \$87,600
- 3 of the excessive contributions by providing redesignation and reattribution letters, and that in
- 4 response to the Audit Division's Draft Final Audit Report, had provided a list of refund checks
- 5 untimely issued for the remaining \$42,000 of excessive contributions and remaining \$10,450 of
- 6 prohibited contributions.<sup>6</sup>
- Pursuant to the 2019-2020 Cycle Materiality Thresholds, the Audit Division referred the
- 8 Committee to OGC. Specifically, the Audit Division referred the Committee for underreporting
- 9 its receipts in calendar year 2020 by \$120,605,8 for receiving a total of \$129,600 in excessive

Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress – Reported Receipts							
Monthly Report		nended Filing Feb. 15, 2021)	F	Latest Amended iling (July 26, 2022)		Difference	Over or Under Reporting
2020 Pre-Primary	\$	40,650.00	\$	42,028.45	\$	1,378.45	\$ (1,378.45)
2020 April Quarterly	\$	184,822.97	\$	206,889.77	\$	22,066.80	\$ (22,066.80)
2020 July Quarterly	\$	34,285.00	\$	42,391.32	\$	8,106.32	\$ (8,106.32)

Final Audit Report of the Commission on Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress (January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020), <a href="https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/SheilaJacksonLee\_FARC\_2020.pdf">https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/SheilaJacksonLee\_FARC\_2020.pdf</a> ("Final Audit Report").

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 8, 12-13, 16-17.

Audit Referral AR 23-02 (Mar. 9, 2023) (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress).

The Final Audit Report's finding that the Committee underreported its receipts for calendar year 2020 by \$120,605 is based on the Audit Division's use of the Committee's most recent amendments prior to the Audit Notification, which took place on February 15, 2021, and the Committee's most recent amendments to-date, which occurred on July 26, 2022. Audit Division 2019-2020 Cycle Materiality Thresholds, Authorized Committees at 29 (for a misstatement of financial activity, Audit looks to the "most recently filed reports as of the date of the Audit Notification Letter (receipts, disbursements, and cash on hand) and the correct reportable activity according to the bank reconciliation"). Had the Audit Division calculated the Committee's reporting errors by using the Committee's original reports and its most recent amendments to-date, it would have shown that the Committee overreported its 2020 receipts by \$4,870,922, most of which was the result of an incorrect \$5,000,000 contribution reported on the Committee's original 2020 Pre-General Report that was later amended to reflect a \$5,000 PAC contribution. Compare Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress, 2020 Pre-General Report at 5 (Oct. 22, 2020), <a href="https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/813/202010229336305813/202010229336305813.pdf">https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/813/202010229336305813/202010229336305813.pdf</a>, with Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress, Amended 2020 Pre-General Report at 5 (Dec. 13, 2020), <a href="https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/964/202012139374346964/202012139374346964.pdf">https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/964/202012139374346964/202012139374346964.pdf</a>. Compare the two charts below:

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- 1 contributions during the 2019-2020 election cycle, and for receiving a total of \$10,450 in
- 2 prohibited corporate contributions during the 2019-2020 election cycle. 9 On March 10, 2023,
- 3 OGC notified the Committee of the Referral and that it was subject to possible enforcement
- 4 action.<sup>10</sup>

2020 Oct. Quarterly	\$ 143,886.89	\$ 167,381.28	\$ 23,494.39	\$ (23,494.39)
2020 Pre-General	\$ 7,760.00	\$ 5,405.00	\$ 2,355.00	\$ (2,355.00)
2020 Post General	\$ 113,386.80	\$ 181,342.47	\$ 67,955.67	\$ (67,955.67)
2020 Year End	\$ 480.25	\$ 763.47	\$ 283.22	\$ (283.22)
2020 Total	\$ 525,271.91	\$ 646,201.76	\$ 120,929.85	\$ (120,929.85)

Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress – Reported Receipts								
Monthly Report	O	riginal Report	La	test Amended Filing (July 26, 2022)		Difference	(	Over or Under Reporting
2020 Pre-Primary	\$	40,650.00	\$	42,028.45	\$	1,378.45	\$	(1,378.45)
2020 April Quarterly	\$	185,139.35	\$	206,889.77	\$	21,750.42	\$	(21,750.42)
2020 July Quarterly	\$	32,785.00	\$	42,391.32	\$	9,606.32	\$	(9,606.32)
2020 Oct. Quarterly	\$	143,886.89	\$	167,381.28	\$	23,494.39	\$	(23,494.39)
2020 Pre-General	\$	5,002,760.00	\$	5,405.00	\$	4,997,355.00	\$	4,997,355.00
2020 Post General	\$	111,422.27	\$	181,342.47	\$	69,920.20	\$	(69,920.20)
2020 Year End	\$	480.25	\$	763.47	\$	283.22	\$	(283.22)
2020 Total	\$	5,517,123.76		\$ 646,201.76	\$	4,870,922.00	\$	4,870,922.00

The single misreported entry totaling \$5,000,000 on the Committee's original 2020 Pre-General Report was not referred by RAD because in response to the Commission's November 22, 2020 Request for Additional Information, the Committee subsequently amended the amount to \$5,000 and included a memo entry that the previously reported amount was incorrect. Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress, Amended 2020 Pre-General Report at 5 (Feb. 15, 2021), https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/400/202102159427792400/202102159427792400.pdf.

<sup>9</sup> See Referral at 1-2.

Notification Letter from Charles Kitcher, Associate General Counsel for Enforcement, FEC, to Neil P. Reiff and Joseph E. Sandler, Sandler Reiff Lamb & Birkenstock, P.C. (Mar. 10, 2023).

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The Committee's Response "acknowledges that its previous compliance challenges lead to errors in disclosure and the acceptance of both excessive and prohibited contributions." The Committee attributes the errors to the fact that its 2020 compliance operations were handled by a part-time treasurer. The Committee states that it has since transferred its compliance operations to an outside firm, amended its disclosure reports, and refunded all excessive and prohibited contributions. The Committee states that it has since transferred its compliance operations to an outside firm, amended its disclosure reports, and refunded all excessive and prohibited contributions.

## III. LEGAL ANALYSIS

The Act requires committee treasurers to file reports in accordance with the provisions of 52 U.S.C. § 30104(a), (b). <sup>14</sup> These reports must be timely and must include, *inter alia*, the total amount of receipts, including the appropriate itemizations, where required. <sup>15</sup> The Commission's Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the Committee underreported its receipts for calendar year 2020 by \$120,605. <sup>16</sup> Accordingly, the available information indicates that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by misstating its receipts in calendar year 2020.

The Act limits the amount an individual may contribute to a candidate's authorized committee per election, and likewise, the Act prohibits any candidate or committee from knowingly accepting an excessive contribution. <sup>17</sup> The Act also prohibits corporations from making contributions to federal candidates or their committees and corporate officers and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Resp. at 1 (Mar. 21, 2023).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(a)(1), (b); see also 11 C.F.R. § 104.1(a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b); 11 C.F.R. § 104.3.

Final Audit Report at 5-8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(A), (f).

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- directors from consenting to such contributions. 18 It also prohibits federal candidates or their
- 2 committees from knowingly accepting corporate contributions. 19

A committee's treasurer is responsible for examining all contributions received for evidence of illegality and for ascertaining whether contributions received, when aggregated with other contributions from the same contributor, exceed the Act's contribution limits.<sup>20</sup> Treasurers must make their best efforts to determine the legality of the contribution.<sup>21</sup> If the legality of the contribution cannot be determined, the treasurer must refund the contribution within 30 days of receipt.<sup>22</sup> Contributions which on their face exceed the contribution limits, and contributions which do not appear to exceed the contribution limits but exceed contribution limits when aggregated with other contributions, and which cannot be accepted under the net debts outstanding provisions, may be returned to the contributor or deposited.<sup>23</sup> If deposited, contributions must be: (1) redesignated in accordance with 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(5) or 110.2(b)(5); (2) reattributed in accordance with 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(k)(3); or (3) refunded within 60 days of the date that the committee has actual notice of the need to refund, redesignate or reattribute the contributions.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* § 30118(a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 103.3(b).

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* § 103.3(b)(1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> *Id*.

Id. § 103.3(b)(3); see also id. § 110.1(b)(3) (a contribution designated for a particular election shall not exceed the amount of net debts outstanding from that election).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> *Id.* § 103.3(b)(3).

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1	During the 2019-2020 election cycle, the Act and Commission regulations limited an
2	authorized committee to accepting a total of \$2,800 per election from any individual. <sup>25</sup> The
3	Commission's Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the Committee
4	accepted excessive contributions totaling \$129,600 during the 2019-2020 election cycle. 26 The
5	Committee did not refund these contributions within 60 days. <sup>27</sup> Accordingly, the available
6	information indicates that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by
7	knowingly accepting excessive contributions.
8	The Commission's Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the
9	Committee accepted prohibited corporate contributions totaling \$10,450 during the 2019-2020
10	election cycle. <sup>28</sup> The Committee did not refund these contributions within 30 days. <sup>29</sup> Thus,
11	available information indicates that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R.
12	§ 114.2 by knowingly accepting prohibited corporate contributions.
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<sup>52</sup> U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b); Price Index Adjustments for Contribution and Expenditure Limitations and Lobbyist Bundling Disclosure Threshold, 84 Fed. Reg. 2504, 2506 (Feb. 7, 2019) ("Price Index Adjustments").

<sup>26</sup> Final Audit Report at 8-13.

According to the Audit Division's records, the Committee received the last of the excessive contributions on November 13, 2020, and did not begin to refund these contributions until July 26, 2022.

<sup>28</sup> Final Audit Report at 13-17.

<sup>29</sup> According to the Audit Division's records, the Committee received the last of the prohibited contributions on October 23, 2020, and did not begin to refund these contributions until July 25, 2022.

AR 23-02 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) First General Counsel's Report Page 8 of 11

Because the 2019-2020 Cycle Audit Materiality Thresholds reflect activity that, in the Commission's judgment, warrants enforcement action, and because there is no factual dispute regarding the activity as set forth in the Commission's Final Audit Report, we recommend that the Commission open a MUR and find reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by misstating its receipts in calendar year 2020. We also recommend that the Commission find reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by knowingly accepting excessive contributions. We further recommend that the Commission find reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C.

§ 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. § 114.2 by knowingly accepting prohibited corporate contributions.

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# V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11 1. Open a MUR;
- Find reason to believe that Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress and Karen Y. Grays in her official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by misstating \$120,605 in receipts in calendar year 2020;

AR 23-02 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) First General Counsel's Report Page 11 of 11

1 2 3	3.	Find reason to believe that Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress and Karen Y. Grays in her official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by knowingly accepting a total of \$129,600 of excessive contributions;				
4 5 6 7	4. Find reason to believe that Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress and Karen Y. Grain her official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.F. § 114.2 by knowingly accepting a total of \$10,450 of prohibited corporate contributions;					
8	5.	Approve the attached Factual and Legal Analysis;				
9	6.	Approve the attached proposed Conciliation Agreement; and				
10	7.	Approve the appropriate letter.				
11 12 13 14		Lisa J. Stevenson Acting General Counsel				
16 17		Charles Kitcher Associate General Counsel for Enforcement				
18 19	August 14, 2	023 Landio fazi				
20	Date	Claudio J. Pavia				
21		Deputy Associate General Counsel				
22		for Enforcement				
23						
21 22 23 24 25 26 27		An Rug				
26		Aaron Rabinowitz				
27		Assistant General Counsel				
28		Application Countries				
29						
		Christopher S. Curran				
31		Christopher S. Curran				
32		Attorney				
33		, and the second se				
30 31 32 33 34	Attachments					
36	1 Fo	ctual and Legal Analysis				
30 37	1. Ta	ordan and Logan Amarysis				

1	FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS							
2 3								
4 5 6 7	RESPONDENTS:	Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress and Karen Y. Grays in her official capacity as treasurer	MUR: 8213					
8 9	I. INTRODUC	TION						
10 11	This matter a	rises from an audit of the 2019-2020 election	on cycle activity of Sheila					
12	Jackson Lee for Con	gress and Karen Y. Grays in her official cap	pacity as treasurer (the					
13	"Committee"). On M	March 9, 2023, the Audit Division referred t	he Committee to the Office of					
14	General Counsel ("C	GC") for misstating its 2020 calendar year	receipts; receiving excessive					
15	contributions in 2019	and 2020; and receiving prohibited corpor	rate contributions in 2019 and					
16	2020, in violation of	the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971	1, as amended (the "Act"). The					
17	Committee acknowle	edges both the misreporting and acceptance	of excessive and prohibited					
18	corporate contribution	ons but asserts that it has materially correcte	ed the relevant reports, refunded					
19	the excessive and pro	phibited contributions, and spent considerab	ole resources to improve its					
20	compliance procedur	res.						
21	For the reason	ns set forth below, the Commission finds re	eason to believe that the					
22	Committee violated	52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3	B by misstating its receipts, that					
23	the Committee violat	ted 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 1	10.9 by knowingly accepting					
24	excessive contribution	ons, and that the Committee violated 52 U.S	S.C. § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R.					
25	§ 114.2 by knowingl	y accepting prohibited corporate contribution	ons.					

MUR 8213 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 2 of 6

### II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

1

- 2 The Committee is the principal campaign committee of U.S. Representative Sheila
- 3 Jackson Lee; Karen Y. Grays is its treasurer.<sup>1</sup>
- 4 On April 28, 2021, the Audit Division notified the Committee that it would be the subject
- of a Commission audit of its 2019-2020 election cycle activity. On January 18, 2023, the
- 6 Commission approved the Audit Division's Recommendation Memorandum.<sup>3</sup> On March 6,
- 7 2023, the Commission approved an edited Proposed Final Audit Report.<sup>4</sup> The Commission-
- 8 approved Final Audit Report found that the Committee misstated its financial activity, received
- 9 excessive contributions totaling \$129,600, and received prohibited corporate contributions
- totaling \$10,450.<sup>5</sup> The Final Audit Report noted that the Committee untimely resolved \$87,600
- of the excessive contributions by providing redesignation and reattribution letters, and that in
- response to the Audit Division's Draft Final Audit Report, had provided a list of refund checks
- untimely issued for the remaining \$42,000 of excessive contributions and remaining \$10,450 of
- 14 prohibited contributions.<sup>6</sup>
- Pursuant to the 2019-2020 Cycle Materiality Thresholds, the Audit Division referred the
- 16 Committee to OGC. <sup>7</sup> Specifically, the Audit Division referred the Committee for underreporting

Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress, Statement of Organization (Oct. 2, 2018), https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/296/201810029124272296/201810029124272296.pdf.

Letter from Dayna C. Brown, Acting Assistant Staff Director Audit Division, FEC, to Karen Y. Grays, Treasurer, Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress (Apr. 28, 2021) ("Audit Notification").

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Certification ("Cert.") (Jan. 18, 2023), A21-05 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Cert. (Mar. 6, 2023), A21-05 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) (approving Proposed Final Audit Report for the Committee, subject to edits circulated by Commissioner Cooksey's office).

Final Audit Report of the Commission on Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress (January 1, 2019 – December 31, 2020), <a href="https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/SheilaJacksonLee\_FARC\_2020.pdf">https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/SheilaJacksonLee\_FARC\_2020.pdf</a> ("Final Audit Report").

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 8, 12-13, 16-17.

Audit Referral AR 23-02 (Mar. 9, 2023) (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress).

MUR 8213 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 3 of 6

- 1 its receipts in calendar year 2020 by \$120,605, for receiving a total of \$129,600 in excessive
- 2 contributions during the 2019-2020 election cycle, and for receiving a total of \$10,450 in
- 3 prohibited corporate contributions during the 2019-2020 election cycle. 8 On March 10, 2023,
- 4 OGC notified the Committee of the Referral and that it was subject to possible enforcement
- 5 action.<sup>9</sup>

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- The Committee's Response "acknowledges that its previous compliance challenges lead
- 7 to errors in disclosure and the acceptance of both excessive and prohibited contributions." The
- 8 Committee attributes the errors to the fact that its 2020 compliance operations were handled by a
- 9 part-time treasurer. 11 The Committee states that it has since transferred its compliance
- operations to an outside firm, amended its disclosure reports, and refunded all excessive and
- 11 prohibited contributions. 12

### III. LEGAL ANALYSIS

13 The Act requires committee treasurers to file reports in accordance with the provisions of

52 U.S.C. § 30104(a), (b). 13 These reports must be timely and must include, *inter alia*, the total

amount of receipts, including the appropriate itemizations, where required. <sup>14</sup> The Commission's

Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the Committee underreported its

17 receipts for calendar year 2020 by \$120,605. 15 Accordingly, the available information indicates

<sup>8</sup> See Referral at 1-2.

Notification Letter from Charles Kitcher, Associate General Counsel for Enforcement, FEC, to Neil P. Reiff and Joseph E. Sandler, Sandler Reiff Lamb & Birkenstock, P.C. (Mar. 10, 2023).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Resp. at 1 (Mar. 21, 2023).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(a)(1), (b); see also 11 C.F.R. § 104.1(a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b); 11 C.F.R. § 104.3.

Final Audit Report at 5-8.

MUR 8213 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 4 of 6

that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by misstating its

2 receipts in calendar year 2020.

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The Act limits the amount an individual may contribute to a candidate's authorized

committee per election, and likewise, the Act prohibits any candidate or committee from

knowingly accepting an excessive contribution. 16 The Act also prohibits corporations from

making contributions to federal candidates or their committees and corporate officers and

directors from consenting to such contributions. 17 It also prohibits federal candidates or their

committees from knowingly accepting corporate contributions. 18

A committee's treasurer is responsible for examining all contributions received for evidence of illegality and for ascertaining whether contributions received, when aggregated with other contributions from the same contributor, exceed the Act's contribution limits. <sup>19</sup> Treasurers must make their best efforts to determine the legality of the contribution. <sup>20</sup> If the legality of the contribution cannot be determined, the treasurer must refund the contribution within 30 days of receipt. <sup>21</sup> Contributions which on their face exceed the contribution limits, and contributions which do not appear to exceed the contribution limits but exceed contribution limits when aggregated with other contributions, and which cannot be accepted under the net debts outstanding provisions, may be returned to the contributor or deposited. <sup>22</sup> If deposited,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> 52 U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(A), (f).

<sup>17</sup> Id. § 30118(a).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> *Id*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> 11 C.F.R. § 103.3(b).

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* § 103.3(b)(1).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> *Id*.

Id. § 103.3(b)(3); see also id. § 110.1(b)(3) (a contribution designated for a particular election shall not exceed the amount of net debts outstanding from that election).

MUR 8213 (Sheila Jackson Lee for Congress) Factual and Legal Analysis Page 5 of 6

- 1 contributions must be: (1) redesignated in accordance with 11 C.F.R. §§ 110.1(b)(5) or
- 2 110.2(b)(5); (2) reattributed in accordance with 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(k)(3); or (3) refunded within
- 3 60 days of the date that the committee has actual notice of the need to refund, redesignate or
- 4 reattribute the contributions.<sup>23</sup>
- 5 During the 2019-2020 election cycle, the Act and Commission regulations limited an
- 6 authorized committee to accepting a total of \$2,800 per election from any individual.<sup>24</sup> The
- 7 Commission's Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the Committee
- 8 accepted excessive contributions totaling \$129,600 during the 2019-2020 election cycle. 25 The
- 9 Committee did not refund these contributions within 60 days. Accordingly, the available
- information indicates that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by
- 11 knowingly accepting excessive contributions.
- The Commission's Final Audit Report found, and the Response acknowledges, that the
- 13 Committee accepted prohibited corporate contributions totaling \$10,450 during the 2019-2020
- election cycle. 26 The Committee did not refund these contributions within 30 days. Thus,
- available information indicates that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R.
- 16 § 114.2 by knowingly accepting prohibited corporate contributions.
- Because the 2019-2020 Cycle Audit Materiality Thresholds reflect activity that, in the
- 18 Commission's judgment, warrants enforcement action, and because there is no factual dispute
- 19 regarding the activity as set forth in the Commission's Final Audit Report, the Commission finds

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* § 103.3(b)(3).

<sup>52</sup> U.S.C. § 30116(a)(1)(A); 11 C.F.R. § 110.1(b); Price Index Adjustments for Contribution and Expenditure Limitations and Lobbyist Bundling Disclosure Threshold, 84 Fed. Reg. 2504, 2506 (Feb. 7, 2019) ("Price Index Adjustments").

Final Audit Report at 8-13.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at 13-17.

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- reason to believe that the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(b) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.3 by
- 2 misstating its receipts in calendar year 2020. The Commission also finds reason to believe that
- 3 the Committee violated 52 U.S.C. § 30116(f) and 11 C.F.R. § 110.9 by knowingly accepting
- 4 excessive contributions. Finally, the Commission finds reason to believe that the Committee
- 5 violated 52 U.S.C. § 30118(a) and 11 C.F.R. § 114.2 by knowingly accepting prohibited
- 6 corporate contributions.