



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

July 3, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

ron@hoevetlaw.com

Ronald H. Hoevet, Esq.
Hoevet Olson
1000 SW Broadway, Suite 1740
Portland, OR 97205

RE: MUR 8159

Dear Mr. Hoevet:

On August 31, 2023, the Federal Election Commission notified your clients, Rosa Cazares and Aaron R. Mitchell, of a complaint alleging violations of certain sections of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the "Act"). A copy of the complaint was forwarded to your clients at that time.

Upon further review of the allegations contained in the complaint, and information supplied by you, the Commission, on June 3, 2024, voted to dismiss this matter and close the file effective July 3, 2024. The General Counsel's Report, which more fully explains the Commission's decision, is enclosed for your information.

Documents related to the case will be placed on the public record today. *See* Disclosure of Certain Documents in Enforcement and Other Matters, 81 Fed. Reg. 50,702 (Aug. 2, 2016).

Sincerely,

Lisa J. Stevenson
Acting General Counsel

Wanda D. Brown

BY: Wanda D. Brown
Assistant General Counsel

Enclosure
General Counsel's Report

BEFORE THE FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

ENFORCEMENT PRIORITY SYSTEM

DISMISSAL REPORT

MUR: 8159

Respondents: Val Hoyle for Congress and Holly Giarraputo in her official capacity as treasurer
Valerie Hoyle
Rosa Cazares
Aaron Mitchell

Complaint Receipt Date: August 24, 2023

Response Dates: September 12, 2023; September 15, 2023

**Alleged Statutory/
Regulatory Violations:**

52 U.S.C. § 30123
11 C.F.R. § 110.4(c)

The Complaint alleges that Valerie Hoyle, a 2022 candidate in Oregon’s 4th Congressional District,¹ and her principal campaign committee, Val Hoyle for Congress and Holly Giarraputo in her official capacity as treasurer (the “Committee”),² received cash contributions totaling \$5,800 from Rosa Cazares and Aaron Mitchell without promptly returning the amount over \$100 to each contributor, in violation of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”), and Commission regulations.³ The Complaint includes two press articles. One article, authored by the Complainant, states that Cazares and Mitchell previously made state political contributions in cash and that, according to a November 2022 court filing, Mitchell does not possess bank or credit card

¹ Valerie Hoyle, Amended Statement of Candidacy (Dec. 13, 2021), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/605/202112139469841605/202112139469841605.pdf>. Hoyle is also a 2024 election cycle candidate in Oregon’s 4th Congressional District. Valerie Hoyle, Amended Statement of Candidacy (Nov. 23, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/087/202211259547037087/202211259547037087.pdf>.

² Val Hoyle for Congress, Amended Statement of Organization at 2 (Nov. 23, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/088/202211259547037088/202211259547037088.pdf>.

³ Compl. at 1 (Aug. 24, 2023).

1 accounts in his name.⁴ The article further states that the multiple contributions reported as coming
2 from Cazares and Mitchell to the Committee on the same day is unusual.⁵ Nonetheless, the article
3 clarifies that the assertion that the contributions were made in cash is ultimately based on
4 speculation.⁶ The second article states that Cazares and Mitchell have previously made political
5 contributions to state committees in cash,⁷ but also states that other contributions made by Mitchell
6 and a Cazares-controlled committee were made by written instruments.⁸

7 In Response, Cazares and Mitchell provide signed declarations attesting that they
8 contributed to the Committee via money order, and both provide images of the money orders.⁹ In
9 particular, Cazares states that she contributed \$3,000 with three money orders (\$2,800 for the 2022
10 primary election and \$200 for the 2022 general election),¹⁰ and Mitchell states that he contributed
11 \$2,800 with three money orders (all for the 2022 primary election).¹¹

12 In Response, the Committee and Hoyle state that the contributions in question were made
13 via money order and provide images of the money orders.¹²

14 Based on its experience and expertise, the Commission has established an Enforcement
15 Priority System using formal, pre-determined scoring criteria to allocate agency resources and
16 assess whether particular matters warrant further administrative enforcement proceedings. These

4 *Id.* at 4.

5 *Id.*

6 *Id.* at 5.

7 *Id.* at 7.

8 *Id.* at 8.

9 Cazares and Mitchell Response Attach. at 6-9, 10-13 (Sept. 13, 2023).

10 *Id.* at 6.

11 *Id.* at 10.

12 Committee and Val Hoyle Response at 1, Exhibit A at 5-10 (Sept. 18, 2023).

1 criteria include (1) the gravity of the alleged violation, taking into account both the type of activity
 2 and the amount in violation; (2) the apparent impact the alleged violation may have had on the
 3 electoral process; (3) the complexity of the legal issues raised in the matter; and (4) recent trends in
 4 potential violations and other developments in the law. This matter is rated as low priority for
 5 Commission action after application of these pre-established criteria. Given that low rating,
 6 apparent low dollar amount at issue, and speculative nature of the Complaint, we recommend that
 7 the Commission dismiss the Complaint, consistent with the Commission's prosecutorial discretion
 8 to determine the proper ordering of its priorities and use of agency resources.¹³ We also
 9 recommend that the Commission close the file effective 30 days from the date of certification of
 10 this vote (or on the next business day after the 30th day, if the 30th day falls on a weekend or
 11 holiday) and send the appropriate letters.

12 Lisa J. Stevenson
 13 Acting General Counsel

14 Charles Kitcher
 15 Associate General Counsel

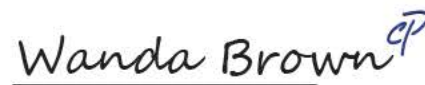
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 20 April 24, 2024


21 Date

22 BY:

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24 Claudio J. Pavia
 25 Deputy Associate General Counsel

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 27 Wanda D. Brown
 28 Assistant General Counsel

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 30 Gordon King
 31 Attorney
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¹³ *Heckler v. Chaney*, 470 U.S. 821, 831-32 (1985).