



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 26, 2024

Via Electronic Mail Only

Raymond G. Lahoud, Treasurer
PA Lawyer Fund
2063 Flint Hill Road
Coopersburg, PA 18036
rghahoud@norris-law.com

RE: MUR 8201
PA Lawyer Fund and Raymond G.
Lahoud in his official capacity as
treasurer

Dear Mr. Lahoud:

In the normal course of carrying out its supervisory responsibilities, the Federal Election Commission (the "Commission") became aware of information suggesting PA Lawyer Fund (the "Committee") and you, in your official capacity as treasurer, may have violated the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the "Act"). On January 23, 2024, the Commission found reason to believe that the Committee and you, in your official capacity as treasurer, violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(g), a provision of the Act. The Factual and Legal Analysis, which formed a basis for the Commission's finding, is enclosed for your information.

We have enclosed a brief description of the Commission's procedures for handling possible violations of the Act. In addition, note that you have a legal obligation to preserve all documents, records and materials relating to this matter until such time as you are notified that the Commission has closed its file in this matter. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 1519. This matter will remain confidential in accordance with 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(4)(B) and 30109(a)(12)(A) unless you notify the Commission in writing that you wish the matter to be made public. Please be advised that although the Commission cannot disclose information regarding an investigation to the public, it may share information on a confidential basis with other law enforcement agencies.¹

To expedite the resolution of this matter, the Commission has authorized the Office of the General Counsel to enter into negotiations directed towards reaching a conciliation agreement in settlement of this matter prior to a finding of probable cause to believe. Pre-probable cause conciliation is not mandated by the Act or the Commission's regulations, but is a voluntary step

¹ The Commission has the statutory authority to refer knowing and willful violations of the Act to the Department of Justice for potential criminal prosecution, 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(5)(C), and to report information regarding violations of law not within its jurisdiction to appropriate law enforcement authorities. *Id.* § 30107(a)(9).

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in the enforcement process that the Commission is offering you as a way to resolve this matter at an early stage and without the need for briefing the issue of whether or not the Commission should find probable cause to believe that you violated the law. [REDACTED]

If you are interested in engaging in pre-probable cause conciliation, please contact Matt Lupo, the attorney assigned to this matter, at (202) 694-1688 or mlupo@fec.gov, within seven days of receipt of this letter. During conciliation, you may submit any factual or legal materials that you believe are relevant to the resolution of this matter. Because the Commission only enters into pre-probable cause conciliation in matters that it believes have a reasonable opportunity for settlement, we may proceed to the next step in the enforcement process if a mutually acceptable conciliation agreement cannot be reached within sixty days. See 52 U.S.C. § 30109(a), 11 C.F.R. Part 111 (Subpart A). Conversely, if you are not interested in pre-probable cause conciliation, the Commission may conduct formal discovery in this matter or proceed to the next step in the enforcement process. Please note that once the Commission enters the next step in the enforcement process, it may decline to engage in further settlement discussions until after making a probable cause finding.

Pre-probable cause conciliation, extensions of time, and other enforcement procedures and options are discussed more comprehensively in the Commission's "Guidebook for Complainants and Respondents on the FEC Enforcement Process," which is available on the Commission's website at http://www.fec.gov/em/respondent_guide.pdf.

If you intend to be represented by counsel in this matter, please advise the Commission by completing the enclosed Designation of Counsel form stating the name, address, and telephone number of such counsel, and authorizing such counsel to receive any notifications and other communications from the Commission.

We look forward to your response.

On behalf of the Commission,



Sean J. Cooksey
Chairman

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Enclosures
Factual and Legal Analysis



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION**FACTUAL AND LEGAL ANALYSIS**

RESPONDENT: PA Lawyer Fund and Raymond G. Lahoud in **MUR:** 8201
his official capacity as treasurer

I. INTRODUCTION

The Reports Analysis Division (“RAD”) referred PA Lawyer Fund and Raymond G. Lahoud in his official capacity as treasurer (the “Committee”) to the Office of General Counsel for failing to timely file one 24-Hour Report to support eight independent expenditures (“IEs”) totaling \$2,500,000.00.¹ On November 18, 2022, the Committee filed its 2022 30-Day Post-General Report that included a Schedule E (Itemized IE) disclosing the eight IEs at issue.²

The Committee acknowledges its failure to timely file the required 24-Hour Report, but requests that the Commission dismiss the matter.³ The Committee argues that it promptly responded to a Request for Additional Information (“RAI”) regarding the missed 24-Hour Report and has implemented procedures to prevent future violations.⁴ Furthermore, the Committee asserts that since receiving the RAI, it has ceased operations, refunded its remaining contributions on May 26, 2023, and has not solicited any contributions since that date.⁵ The Committee states that it intends to file a termination report once the matter at issue in this RAD Referral is closed.⁶

¹ Referral at 1 (June 7, 2023).

² PA Lawyer Fund, 2022 30-Day Post-General Report, (Nov. 18, 2022), <https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/734/202211189546831734/202211189546831734.pdf>.

³ Resp. at 1 (June 13, 2023).

⁴ *Id.* at 2.

⁵ *Id.* at 3.

⁶ *Id.*

1 Despite the Committee’s stated intention to terminate, the circumstances of the violation
2 do not support dismissal of the matter. Accordingly, the Commission finds reason to believe that
3 PA Lawyer Fund and Raymond G. Lahoud in his official capacity as treasurer violated 52 U.S.C.
4 § 30104(g)(1) of the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended (the “Act”), and
5 11 C.F.R. § 104.4(c) of the Commission’s regulations by failing to timely report IEs aggregating
6 \$1,000 or more made after the 20th day, but more than 24 hours before an election.

7 **II. FACTUAL BACKGROUND**

8 PA Lawyer Fund is an independent expenditure-only political committee (“IEOPC”) that
9 registered with the Commission on October 28, 2022.⁷ Mr. Raymond G. Lahoud is both the
10 Committee’s treasurer and its sole contributor.⁸ After receiving the RFAI from RAD, the
11 Committee refunded its remaining cash on hand of \$500,000 to Mr. Lahoud.⁹

12 On November 18, 2022, the Committee filed its 30-Day Post-General Report that
13 disclosed eight IEs totaling \$2,500,000.00, all of which were disseminated on November 5,
14 2022. On March 6, 2023, RAD sent an RFAI to the Committee referencing the 30-Day Post-
15 General Report.¹⁰ The RFAI noted that the Committee may have failed to file one or more of the

⁷ PA Lawyer Fund, Statement of Organization (Oct. 28, 2022),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/240/202210289546667240/202210289546667240.pdf>.

⁸ PA Lawyer Fund, 2023 Mid-Year Report (June 13, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/940/202306139582142940/202306139582142940.pdf>.

⁹ *Id.*; PA Lawyer Fund, Request for Additional Info. (“RFAI”) at 1 (Mar. 6, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/167/202303060300175167/202303060300175167.pdf>.

¹⁰ PA Lawyer Fund, RFAI at 1 (Mar. 6, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/167/202303060300175167/202303060300175167.pdf>.

1 required 24-Hour Reports of IEs.¹¹ The RFAI included a chart identifying eight IEs, totaling
2 \$2,500,000, for which a 24-Hour Report had not been timely filed.¹²

3 On May 17, 2023, the Committee filed a Form 99 in response to the RFAI stating that it
4 had inadvertently failed to file the 24-Hour Report disclosing the IEs.¹³ It further stated that it
5 had erroneously believed the 24-Hour reporting requirement did not apply and that it had
6 installed procedures to avoid future violations.¹⁴ On May 26, 2023, the Committee refunded its
7 remaining \$500,000 cash on hand to its sole donor and treasurer, Raymond Lahoud.

8 On June 8, 2023, the Committee was notified of the referral.¹⁵ On June 13, 2023, the
9 Committee filed a Response acknowledging its failure to timely file the 24-Hour Report at issue,
10 noting that it responded immediately to the RFAI, and highlighting that it had installed
11 procedures to avoid future violations.¹⁶ Moreover, the Response asserts that the Committee had
12 since decided to cease operations, refunded all remaining contributions on May 26, 2023, and
13 has not since solicited any contributions.¹⁷ Finally, the Committee expressed its intention to
14 terminate and requests that the Commission dismiss this matter, after which the Committee
15 intends to file a termination report.¹⁸ The Committee's latest disclosure report, its 2023 Mid-

¹¹ *Id.*

¹² *Id.*, Attach. 1.

¹³ PA Lawyer Fund, Form 99 (Miscellaneous Text) (May 17, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/969/202305179581533969/202305179581533969.pdf>.

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Notif. Letter (June 8, 2023).

¹⁶ Resp. at 1, 2 (June 13, 2023).

¹⁷ *Id.*; see also PA Lawyer Fund, 2023 Mid-Year Report at 4 (June 13, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/940/202306139582142940/202306139582142940.pdf>.

¹⁸ Resp. at 3.

1 Year Report, indicates that it has no debts or obligations and an ending cash-on-hand balance of
2 \$0.¹⁹

3 **III. LEGAL ANALYSIS**

4 Political committees must file periodic reports disclosing their receipts and
5 disbursements.²⁰ An independent expenditure is an expenditure that expressly advocates the
6 election or defeat of a clearly identified federal candidate, and is not made in concert or
7 cooperation with or at the request of such candidate, the candidate's authorized political
8 committee, or their agents.²¹ Additionally, committees that make independent expenditures
9 aggregating \$1,000 or more with respect to a given election after the 20th day, but more than 24
10 hours before the date of that election, must file a 24-Hour Report to disclose such independent
11 expenditures by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard/Daylight Time on the day following the date on
12 which a communication is publicly distributed or otherwise publicly disseminated.²²

13 Here, the independent expenditures were made after the 20th day, but more than 24 hours
14 before the election,²³ and the aggregate amount was over \$1,000.²⁴ As such, the Committee was
15 required to file a 24-Hour Report. However, the Committee failed to do so, and acknowledged
16 its failure in stating that it did not believe the 24-Hour reporting requirement applied to
17 IEOPCs.²⁵

¹⁹ PA Lawyer Fund, 2023 Mid-Year Report at 2 (June 13, 2023),
<https://docquery.fec.gov/pdf/940/202306139582142940/202306139582142940.pdf>.

²⁰ 52 U.S.C. § 30104(a).

²¹ *Id.* § 30101(17); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 100.22(a), (b) (definition of “expressly advocating”).

²² 52 U.S.C. § 30104(g)(1); 11 C.F.R. § 104.4(c).

²³ Referral at 1.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Resp. at 3.

1 Although the Committee claims that its failure to file was inadvertent, it is still
2 responsible for its reporting obligations.²⁶ As such, dismissing this matter would be
3 inappropriate, particularly given that \$2,500,000 of independent expenditures were not timely
4 disclosed. Consistent with our findings in prior MURs with similar violations,²⁷ the Commission
5 finds reason to believe that PA Lawyer Fund and Raymond G. Lahoud in his official capacity as
6 treasurer violated 52 U.S.C. § 30104(g)(1) and 11 C.F.R. § 104.4(c).

²⁶ *Supra* note 22.

²⁷ *See* Factual & Legal Analysis (“F&LA”) at 3, MUR 8012 (Black Voters Matter); F&LA at 4, MUR 7436 (Warrior PAC); F&LA at 3, MUR 7276 (Right to Rise USA).