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*BOARD CERTIFIED CIVIL TRIAL ADVOCATE
*ALSO ADMITTED IN PA

May 31, 2012

RECEIVED
FEDERAL ELECTION
COMMISSION
Jun 01
2012 ~~MAY 31~~ AM 11:52
OFFICE OF GENERAL
COUNSEL
E-MAIL: RPW@WEINSTEINWISSER.COM
E-MAIL: KMW@WEINSTEINWISSER.COM

Office of General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20463

MUR # 6586

RE: *Journal Inquirer*

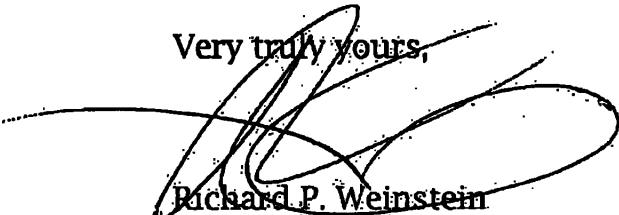
Dear Counsel:

We hereby on behalf of our client file the enclosed complaint to the Federal Election Commission that WWE Inc. of 1241 East Main St., Stamford, Connecticut 06902, is violating federal election law by rendering corporation assistance to the U.S. Senate candidacy of Linda McMahon, wife of WWE CEO Vincent K. McMahon.

That assistance is manifested by the letter sent by WWE Senior Vice President Brian Flinn, dated May 24, 2012, threatening my clients with a libel lawsuit for criticizing Linda McMahon in two political commentaries written by Powell and published in the Journal Inquirer on January 28-29 and May 21, 2012, respectively. Neither commentary mentioned WWE, so the only purpose of Flinn's letter is intended to use WWE to defend the candidate and to seek to have a chilling effect on journalists in Connecticut who might otherwise criticize Linda McMahon during her campaign.

Copies of the letter from WWE's Flinn and the commentaries by Powell cited in Flinn's letter are attached to the complaint.

Very truly yours,


Richard P. Weinstein

RPW:lmv

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MUR # 6586

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COMMISSION

Jun 01
2012 ~~MAY 02~~ AM 11:5

COMPLAINT

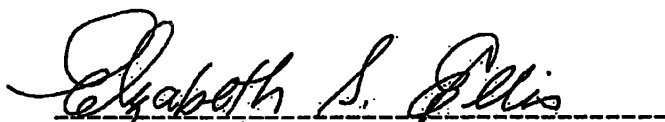
OFFICE OF GENER.
COUNSEL

I, the undersigned, am the publisher of the Journal Inquirer, 306 Progress Drive, Manchester, Connecticut, a daily newspaper in eastern Connecticut.

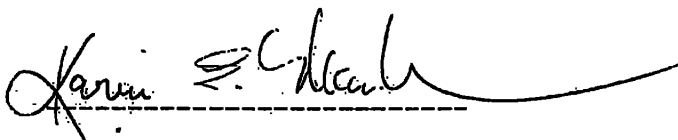
The managing editor of the paper, Chris Powell, wrote two political commentaries which were published in the paper on January 28-29, 2012 and May 21, 2012 respectively, copies of which are attached hereto.

The commentaries were directed to the U.S. senatorial campaign of Linda McMahon, who founded and owned with her husband World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE), 1241 East Main St., Stamford, Connecticut 06902, which is owned and controlled by her husband, Vincent McMahon.

WWE was not mentioned in either commentary, yet the paper received a letter dated May 24, 2012 from WWE threatening a libel suit, a copy of which is also attached hereto. I do not believe that the Journal Inquirer libeled WWE and the letter is meant to discourage our right to comment on Mrs. McMahon.


Elizabeth S. Ellis

Sworn to and subscribed before me
this 31st day of May, 2012.



Notary Public
My commission expires:

KARIN E. MARSH
NOTARY PUBLIC
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES OCT. 31, 2013

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McMahon vs. Shays, Vanity vs. Politics

By Chris Powell
Journal Inquirer
Saturday, January 28, 2012

Are Connecticut's Republicans really going to nominate Linda McMahon for U.S. senator again? It could seem so, as she has collected endorsements from dozens of party leaders, if Connecticut's Republican Party can be said to have leaders. Maybe "officials" would be more accurate.

For how could leaders want the party to risk another humiliation like McMahon's campaign for the Senate two years ago? She spent \$50 million from her personal fortune, many times more than had ever been spent in a political campaign in Connecticut, only to run next to last on the Republican state ticket, just a few votes ahead of a candidate who spent nothing at all, losing by double digits to a Democrat, Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, whose frequent exaggeration of his military record might have made him beatable by a credible Republican rather than one whose poll negatives always exceeded her positives.

How could any Republican have much hope that it will be different this time?

Is it because this is supposed to be a Republican year? As weak as the economy remains and as lukewarm as the public is toward President Obama, the polls show no more enthusiasm for the Republican presidential aspirants, most of whom Connecticut regards as hateful, wacky, or both. Two years ago was a Republican year -- everywhere except in Connecticut, where McMahon dragged the whole ticket down, having no qualification for office except her money and vanity and having nothing to say except the script offered by national party headquarters and pollsters.

Connecticut remains a Democratic state and that party will nominate a well-known and experienced Senate candidate, either U.S. Rep. Christopher Murphy or former Secretary of the State Susan Bysiewicz. The Democratic nominee's campaign will be amply funded and he or she will be the favorite in the election.

Maybe in time Connecticut will consider the pornography and mock violence of the wrestling business from which McMahon draws her fortune to be as legitimate as any other business. Maybe Republicans will find a way of squaring that business with the family values they purport to uphold, or the time will come when they don't have to, since social disintegration is the trend in Connecticut, as throughout the country.

But more likely, for the present, Republican leaders supporting McMahon are simply engaging in another default, as they have done many times in recent years, aiming to give the Senate nomination to a self-funding candidate with no record in public life and little familiarity with public policy because this seems to relieve the party of its own responsibility to be a party. Such an attitude has left the party at its lowest point in Connecticut's history.

If Republican expectations are no higher than extravagantly catered campaign events and advertising overkill that only emphasizes that someone is trying to buy an election, McMahon may do just fine again as the nominee. But former U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays says McMahon can't win and he can -- polls indicate as much -- so he's seeking the Republican Senate nomination too.

With three years in the Peace Corps, 12 years in the state House of Representatives, 20 years in the U.S. House of Representatives, and two years on the U.S. Commission on Wartime Contracting, Shays is, depending on one's point of view, either an experienced public servant or a career politician. In any case he lost only one election in 17 and was considered a moderate Republican of some independence, as when he confronted corruption in the state probate court system in the 1980s. He was the last Republican in the U.S. House from New England.

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Some find Shays preachy but he speaks with restraint and never raises his voice even as he doesn't need a script to know what he thinks. Formally announcing his candidacy the other day, he pledged to work to control federal spending and to "take the country back" from special interests. He soon may be reminded that Connecticut is planted thick with them, like military contractors whose products the president suddenly has found expendable. Does anyone in Connecticut really want to control federal spending that much?

But at least until the Republican primary in August, McMahon herself and what she inevitably represents -- buying an election in the absence of any other qualifications -- probably will remain the biggest issue of the Senate campaign.

Chris Powell is managing editor of the Journal Inquirer.

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Chris Powell



Chris Powell

Does Connecticut really not know McMahon yet?

By Chris Powell
Published: Monday, May 21, 2012 10:05 AM EDT

Wrestling entrepreneur Linda McMahon says she lost Connecticut's U.S. Senate election two years ago because people didn't get to know her well enough and certain things about her were misconstrued.

She has to hope so, having just gotten the endorsement of the Republican state convention to run for the Senate again. But the evidence is much to the contrary. After all, most of the money spent on politics in Connecticut in 2010 -- not just on the Senate campaign -- was McMahon's own money, a record-setting \$50 million, which smothered the airwaves with her commercials and stuffed every mailbox in the state with glossy campaign fliers nearly every day from the summer to the election.

In the end 2010 was a Republican year everywhere in the country except Connecticut. McMahon lost by 12 points to a Democrat who had been caught misrepresenting his military service record. She ran next to last on the Republican ticket, ahead of only a minor candidate who spent nothing at all, and dragged the whole ticket down. According to the final polls, more people had a negative opinion of her than a positive one.

If, having spent several times more money than had ever been spent on a campaign in Connecticut, a candidate isn't known well enough, whose fault would that be? But of course nearly everyone knew very well who McMahon was -- that was the problem. Her practical qualifications for office did not extend beyond her fantastic wealth, and that wealth derived from the business of violence, pornography, and general raunch.

McMahon already is flooding the airwaves again with a commercial portraying herself as an Everywoman who was poor once and went through a bankruptcy. Yet Connecticut heard that ad nauseam two years ago. And while McMahon says that to soften her image she is doing more retail campaigning than she did two years ago, her congeniality adds little to her qualifications. Without her ability to spend virtually infinite money, her candidacy would be a joke. Polls show her losing badly again to the Democratic Senate nominee, probably U.S. Rep. Chris Murphy.

For the Republican convention's endorsement, McMahon thanked former U.S. Rep. Chris Shays by a 2-1 margin. But attended entirely by party organization people, conventions are overinfluenced by campaign money. A mere polling statistic is that in the Republican primary two years ago McMahon failed to get 50 percent of the vote against a weak field -- former U.S. Rep. Rob Simmons, who stopped campaigning after the convention, and libertarian financial adviser Peter Schiff, then a political unknown. Both have endorsed Shays this time. And polls show Shays tied with Murphy.

While Shays voted with his party most of the time in Congress, his capacity for original thought and bipartisanship and his exposure of corruption in government already are granting McMahon welcome billing as a "RINO," a "Republican in name only." But McMahon's own Republican credentials are negligible and impugned by her donations to Democratic candidates. National Republican leaders seem to prefer Shays because only he has a good chance of winning.

McMahon's prospects require a transformation far more extensive than the "softening" being undertaken by her campaign. "I'm Linda McMahon and I approved this message," she says in the disclaimer at the end of her ubiquitous commercials. But she's still Linda McMahon.

Governor Malloy and state Comptroller Kevin Lerube announced triumphantly last week that the estimate of the unfunded liabilities in medical insurance benefits for state employees and retirees has been reduced by \$13 billion, 43 percent, because of recent reforms and cost controls. This is great if it comes to pass, but for the moment it is only the rewriting of estimates, which, of course, anyone can do.

What anyone cannot do -- indeed, what no one in government in Connecticut has ever seemed able to do -- is to reduce costs in the here and now. In the here and now all the Malloy administration has given the state is another increase in spending and the biggest tax increase in its history.

Chris Powell is managing editor of the Journal Inquirer.

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Trivia questions, photos, and a tip for senator

Journal Inquirer

Cricket suggestion hat by Malloy's budget job

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Reader Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of Journal Inquirer.com.

R. E. Dechrist wrote on May 21, 2012 1:44 PM:

"You, Mr. Powell, supposedly an unbiased journalist, are a member of the good old boys network. I wonder what your stance is on the 'Rich Man, Republican.' Care to comment on his never-ending claim to wealth and how he is trying to buy the presidency? McMahon is right -- Shays had his chance for many years in Washington. He has shopped for the worse in his absence from Connecticut for several years."

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May 24, 2012

1241 East Main Street
Stamford, CT 06902
T: 203 352 8600

Mr. Chris Powell
Managing Editor
Journal Inquirer
306 Progress Drive
Manchester, CT 06045

Dear Mr. Powell:

It is with great dismay that we find it necessary to once again point out that you have made false statements of fact in the *Journal Inquirer* regarding the business of WWE, this time in your column on Monday, May 21, 2012. That article clearly was intended to state that WWE is a "business of violence, pornography, and general raunch." This is now at least the second time you have made false statements that damage our corporate reputation, and the second time you have stated that WWE is involved in pornography. As we pointed out in our letter of February 2, 2012 following your initial libel, your position as managing editor would ethically require you to report the facts and not distort the truth. That you would repeat the false statement that WWE is in the pornography business, after being told of the falsity of that statement, is especially strong evidence of malice.

With regard to your statement on May 21 that WWE is a "business of violence," WWE programming, like Hollywood movies and Broadway shows, is an exciting blend of action, characters and fictional storylines of good versus evil entertaining millions every week, including approximately 300,000 fans here in Connecticut. Our performers are professionals who have spent many years training to perfect the athletic and choreographed maneuvers on our shows. Your assertion that our content is violent is in direct conflict with the standards and practices departments of our current TV network distributors who have rated our programming TV-PG. We would also note that your prior writings prove that you know WWE is not in the business of actual violence, as your own words in your prior January 28, 2012 article previously described our business as involving "mock violence."

With regard to your false statement that WWE is in the "business of pornography," which you have now stated twice, that statement is categorically false and especially malicious. Simply put, WWE has never been in the pornography business. As we previously advised you on February 2, 2012 when you first libeled WWE by such statements, our broadcast programming is TV-PG and has always appeared on basic cable or broadcast television. As any casual television viewer knows, based on the Federal Communications Commission's rules alone, WWE's programs would not be permitted on broadcast television or basic cable if in fact they were pornography. WWE is family entertainment. In fact, 40% of the millions of fans who attend our live events bring their children. Apart from being completely false, it is insulting to these parents to think that they would take their children to view what you falsely assert is pornography.

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Our company started with 13 employees 30 years ago and has grown to nearly 700, which speaks to the quality and staying power of our product and our organization. WWE may not be your personal choice of entertainment, but that does not give you the right to make false statements of fact about our business which willfully damages our corporate reputation.

Accordingly, WWE hereby demands a retraction in the *Journal Inquirer* by June 4, 2012 in as public a manner as that in which you made these false statements. Should you fail to issue the retraction, we will seek legal and all available remedies.

Sincerely,

Brian Flinn
Senior Vice President, Marketing and Communications

cc: Elizabeth Ellis, Journal Inquirer
Daniela Altimari, Hartford Courant
Tom Dudchik, CT Capitol Report
Rick Green, Hartford Courant
Susan Haigh, Associated Press
Dennis House, WFSB-TV
Brian Lopkhart, Hearst Connecticut Media Group
Kevin Rennie, Hartford Courant
Christine Stuart, CT News Junkie
Neil Vigdor, Hearst Connecticut Media Group

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