

BEFORE THE UNITED STATES
FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION

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Campaign Legal Center
215 E Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 736-2200

Democracy 21
2000 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 355-9600

v.

MUR No. 6487

F8 LLC
86 N. University Avenue
Suite 420
Provo UT 84601

John Doe, Jane Doe and other
persons who created and operated F8
LLC and made contributions to
Restore Our Future in the name of
F8 LLC

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COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF GENERAL
COUNSEL

COMPLAINT

1. This complaint is filed pursuant to 2 U.S.C. § 437g(a)(1) and is based on information and belief that F8 LLC and any person(s) who created, operated and made contributions to or in the name of F8 LLC (John Doe, Jane Doe and other persons) may have violated provisions of the Federal Election Campaign Act ("FECA"), 2 U.S.C. § 431, *et seq.*
2. Specifically, based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that the person(s) who created, operated and/or contributed to F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. § 441f by making a contribution to the political committee Restore Our Future in the name of another person, namely F8 LLC, and that F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. § 441f by knowingly permitting its name to be used for the making of such contribution.

3. Further, based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that F8 LLC and the person(s) who created and operated F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. §§ 432, 433 and 434 by failing to organize F8 LLC as a political committee, as defined at 2 U.S.C. § 431(4), register the political committee and file disclosure reports as a political committee.
4. "If the Commission, upon receiving a complaint . . . has reason to believe that a person has committed, or is about to commit, a violation of [the FECA] . . . [t]he Commission shall make an investigation of such alleged violation" 2 U.S.C. § 437g(a)(2); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 111.4(a) (emphasis added).

BACKGROUND

5. On August 4, 2011, Salt Lake City, Utah television station Fox 13 reported: "A political committee tied to Mitt Romney received two separate \$1 million donations from companies located in Provo, but the companies don't appear to do any substantial business."¹
6. The two companies identified by Fox 13 are F8 LLC and Eli Publishing, which share an address in Provo, UT.²
7. Jeremy S. Blickenstaff is the registered agent of F8 LLC.³
8. The political committee named in the Fox 13 article is Restore Our Future, FEC committee identification number C00490045, which reported receiving a \$1 million contribution from F8 LLC on its mid-year report filed with the Commission on July 31, 2011.

¹ Max Roth, *2 Utah companies donate \$1 million apiece to Romney PAC*, FOX 13 NEWS, August 4, 2011, available at <http://www.fox13now.com/news/local/kstu-mitt-romney-2-utah-companies-donate-1-million-apiece-to-romney-campaign-20110804.0.4424937.story>.

² *Id.*

³ See Utah Government Division of Corporations and Commercial Code website database, available at <https://secure.utah.gov/bas/action/details?entity=7172076-0160>.

9. According to the Fox 13 news article, "Eli Publishing and F8 LLC don't seem to do any business. They incorporated with the state, but they have no presence on the internet and when Fox 13 went to their address, we found only an accounting firm whose employees weren't aware of the companies' activities."⁴
10. F8 LLC's registered agent, Jeremy S. Blickenstaff, did not respond to an interview request by Fox 13."⁵

PROHIBITION ON CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE NAME OF ANOTHER

11. FECA provides that "[n]o person shall make a contribution in the name of another person or knowingly permit his name to be used to effect such a contribution and no person shall knowingly accept a contribution made by one person in the name of another person." 2 U.S.C. § 441f.
12. The Commission regulation implementing the statutory prohibition on "contributions in the name of another" provides the following examples of "contributions in the name of another":
- "Giving money or anything of value, all or part of which was provided to the contributor by another person (the true contributor) without disclosing the source of money or the thing of value to the recipient candidate or committee at the time the contribution is made," 11 C.F.R. § 110.4(b)(2)(i).
 - "Making a contribution of money or anything of value and attributing as the source of the money or thing of value another person when in fact the contributor is the source." 11 C.F.R. § 110.4(b)(2)(ii).

⁴ Max Roth, *2 Utah companies donate \$1 million apiece to Romney PAC*, FOX 13 NEWS, August 4, 2011, available at <http://www.fox13now.com/news/local/kstu-mitt-romney-2-utah-companies-donate-1-million-apiece-to-romney-campaign-20110804.0.4424937.story>.

⁵ *Id.*

13. Based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. § 441f by “[g]iving money . . . , all or part of which was provided to” F8 LLC by the person(s) who created, operated and/or contributed to F8 LLC (*i.e.*, the true contributor(s)) without disclosing the source of money to Restore Our Future at the time the contribution was made. *See* 11 C.F.R. § 110.4(b)(2)(i).
14. Based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that the person(s) who created, operated and/or contributed to F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. § 441f by “[m]aking a contribution of money . . . and attributing as the source of the money . . . another person [, namely, F8 LLC,] when in fact [the person(s) who created, operated and/or contributed to F8 LLC was] the source.” *See* 11 C.F.R. § 110.4(b)(2)(ii).
15. Based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. § 441f by “knowingly permit[ting its] name to be used to effect such a contribution.” 2 U.S.C. § 441f.

**POLITICAL COMMITTEE STATUS, REGISTRATION
AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

16. FECA defines the term “political committee” to mean “any committee, club, association or other group of persons which receives contributions aggregating in excess of \$1,000 during a calendar year or which makes expenditures aggregating in excess of \$1,000 during a calendar year.” 2 U.S.C. § 431(4); *see also* 11 C.F.R. § 100.5(a). “Contribution,” in turn, is defined as “any gift, subscription, loan, advance, or deposit of money or anything of value made by any person for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office” 2 U.S.C. § 431(8)(A). Similarly, “expenditure” is defined as “any purchase, payment, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money or anything of value, made by any

person for the purpose of influencing any election for Federal office” 2 U.S.C. § 431(9)(A).

17. In *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976), the Supreme Court construed the term “political committee” to “only encompass organizations that are under the control of a candidate or the major purpose of which is the nomination or election of a candidate.” 424 U.S. at 79 (emphasis added). Again, in *FEC v. Massachusetts Citizens for Life*, 479 U.S. 238 (1986), the Court invoked the “major purpose” test and noted, in the context of analyzing the activities of a 501(c)(4) group, that if a group’s independent spending activities “become so extensive that the organization’s major purpose may be regarded as campaign activity, the corporation would be classified as a political committee.” *Id.* at 262 (emphasis added). In that instance, the Court continued, it would become subject to the “obligations and restrictions applicable to those groups whose primary objective is to influence political campaigns.” *Id.* (emphasis added). The Court in *McConnell* restated the “major purpose” test for political committee status as iterated in *Buckley*. *McConnell v. FEC*, 540 U.S. 93, 170 n.64 (2003).

18. The Commission has explained:

[D]etermining political committee status under FECA, as modified by the Supreme Court, requires an analysis of both an organization’s specific conduct—whether it received \$1,000 in contributions or made \$1,000 in expenditures—as well as its overall conduct—whether its major purpose is Federal campaign activity (*i.e.*, the nomination or election of a Federal candidate).

Supplemental Explanation and Justification on Political Committee Status, 72 Fed. Reg. 5595, 5597 (Feb. 7, 2007).

19. For the reasons set forth above, there is a two prong test for “political committee” status under federal law: (1) whether an entity or other group of persons has a “major purpose” of

influencing the “nomination or election of a candidate,” as stated by *Buckley*, and if so, (2) whether the entity or other group of persons receives “contributions” or makes “expenditures” of \$1,000 or more in a calendar year.

20. Any entity that meets the definition of a “political committee” must file a “statement of organization” with the Federal Election Commission, 2 U.S.C. § 433, must comply with the organizational and recordkeeping requirements of 2 U.S.C. § 432, and must file periodic disclosure reports of its receipts and disbursements, 2 U.S.C. § 434.⁶
21. The political committee disclosure reports required by FECA must disclose to the Commission and the public, including complainants, comprehensive information regarding such committee’s financial activities, including the identity of any donor who has contributed \$200 or more to the committee within the calendar year. *See* 2 U.S.C. § 434(b). The Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized the importance of campaign finance disclosure to informing the electorate. *See, e.g., Citizens United v. FEC*, 130 S. Ct. 876, 915 (“[T]he public has an interest in knowing who is speaking about a candidate shortly before an election.”).
22. Based on published reports, complainants have reason to believe that F8 LLC may have met the two-prong test for political committee status by (1) being an entity or group of persons with the “major purpose” of influencing the “nomination or election of a

⁶ In addition, a “political committee” that does not confine its activities to “independent expenditures” is subject to contribution limits, 2 U.S.C. §§ 441a(a)(1), 441a(a)(2), and source prohibitions, 2 U.S.C. § 441b(a), on the contributions it may receive. 2 U.S.C. § 441a(f); *see also* FEC Ad. Op. 2010-11 at 2 (Commonsense Ten) (A committee that “intends to make only independent expenditures” and “will not make any monetary or in-kind contributions (including coordinated communications) to any other political committee or organization” is not subject to contribution limits.)

candidate”⁷ and (2) by receiving “contributions” of \$1,000 or more in a calendar year. Consequently, complainants have reason to believe that F8 LLC and the person(s) who created and operated F8 LLC may have violated 2 U.S.C. §§ 432, 433 and 434 by failing to organize F8 LLC as a political committee, as defined at 2 U.S.C. § 431(4), register the political committee and file disclosure reports as a political committee.

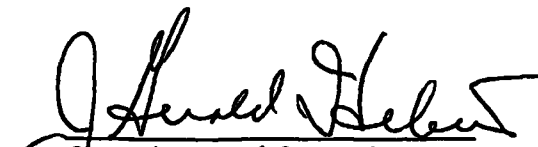
PRAYER FOR RELIEF


23. Wherefore, the Commission should find reason to believe that and F8 LLC the person(s) who created, operated and/or contributed to F8 LLC have violated 2 U.S.C. § 431 *et seq.*, including 2 U.S.C. §§, 432, 433, 434 and 441f and conduct an immediate investigation under 2 U.S.C. § 437g(a)(2). Further, the Commission should determine and impose appropriate sanctions for any and all violations, should enjoin the respondents from any and all violations in the future, and should impose such additional remedies as are necessary and appropriate to ensure compliance with the FECA.

August 11, 2011

⁷ See *Massachusetts Citizens for Life*, 479 U.S. at 262 (If a group’s political activities “become so extensive that the organization’s major purpose may be regarded as campaign activity, the corporation would be classified as a political committee.”)

Respectfully submitted,


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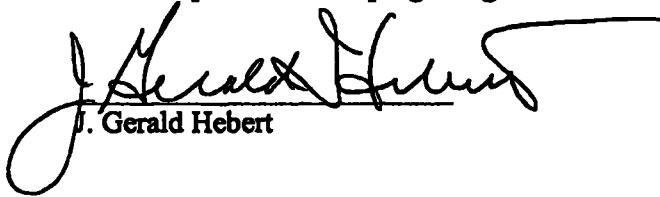
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VERIFICATION

The complainants listed below hereby verify that the statements made in the attached Complaint are, upon their information and belief, true.

Sworn to pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

For Complainant Campaign Legal Center


J. Gerald Hebert

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11 day of August, 2011.


Notary Public

SHARON BRUNTON
NOTARY PUBLIC DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
My Commission Expires May 31, 2013

For Complainant Democracy 21


Fred Wertheimer

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 11 day of August, 2011.


Notary Public

SHARON BRUNTON
NOTARY PUBLIC DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
My Commission Expires May 31, 2013