

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF
MIKE MILLER,
RESPONDENT

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BEFORE THE
TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION
SC-991135

ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION

I. Recitals

The Texas Ethics Commission (the commission) met on December 10, 1999, and voted to accept jurisdiction of and consider Sworn Complaint SC-991135 filed against Mike Miller, Respondent. A quorum of the commission was present. Based on the investigation conducted by commission staff, the commission determined that there is credible evidence of a violation of Section 255.006, Election Code, a law administered and enforced by the commission. To resolve and settle this complaint without further proceedings, the commission proposes this agreed resolution to the respondent.

II. Allegations

The complainant alleges that the respondent, a successful candidate for city council, failed to include the word “for” in his political advertising.

III. Facts Supported by Credible Evidence

Credible evidence available to the commission supports the following findings of fact:

1. At all times relevant to this complaint, the respondent was a candidate for city council in the November 2, 1999, city election. The respondent was not the incumbent.
2. The complainant submitted pictures of signs that stated, “Vote Mike Miller City Council.” The respondent submitted a letter stating that this was his first time to run for an elective office and that he did not know that the law required him to use the word “for.” He apologized for his error.

IV. Findings and Conclusions of Law

The facts described in Section III support the following findings and conclusions of law:

1. The respondent’s signs constitute campaign communications because they are written communications relating to a campaign for election to public office. Section 251.001(17), Election Code. A person may not knowingly represent in a campaign communication that a candidate holds a

public office the candidate does not hold at the time the representation is made. A person represents that a candidate holds a public office the candidate does not hold if the candidate does not hold the office sought and the campaign communication states the public office sought but does not use the word “for” to clarify that the candidate does not hold that office. Section 255.006, Election Code.

2. Because the respondent did not hold the public office that he was seeking and because the campaign communications at issue stated the office sought but did not include the word “for” preceding that office, there is credible evidence that the respondent violated Section 255.006, Election Code.

V. Representations and Agreement by Respondent

By signing this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION and returning it to the commission:

1. The respondent neither admits nor denies the facts described under Section III and the commission's findings and conclusions of law described under Section IV, and consents to the entry of this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION solely for the purpose of resolving and settling this sworn complaint.
2. The respondent consents to the entry of this Order before any adversarial evidentiary hearings or argument before the commission, and before any formal adjudication of law or fact by the commission. The respondent waives any right to a hearing before the commission or an administrative law judge, and further waives any right to a post-hearing procedure established or provided by law.
3. The respondent acknowledges that a candidate is required to use the word “for” in campaign communications to clarify that the candidate does not hold the office sought. The respondent agrees to fully and strictly comply with this requirement of the law.
4. Notwithstanding any other provisions of this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION, the respondent understands and agrees that the commission will consider the respondent to have committed the violations described under Section IV, Paragraph 2, if it is necessary to consider a sanction to be assessed in any future sworn complaint proceedings against the respondent.

VI. Confidentiality

This ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION describes violations that the commission has determined are neither technical nor *de minimis*. Accordingly, this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION is not confidential under section 571.140 of the Government Code, and may be disclosed by members and staff of the commission.

VII. Sanction

After considering the seriousness of the violation described under Sections III and IV, including the nature, circumstances, consequences, extent, and gravity of the violation, after considering the fact that no previous violations by this respondent are known to the commission, and after considering the sanction necessary to deter future violations, the commission imposes no civil penalty for the violation described under Section IV, Paragraph 2.

VIII. Order

The commission hereby ORDERS:

1. that this proposed AGREED RESOLUTION be presented to the respondent;
2. that if the respondent consents to the proposed AGREED RESOLUTION, this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION is a final and complete resolution of SC-991135;
3. that the respondent may consent to the proposed AGREED RESOLUTION only by signing an original of this document and mailing the signed original to the Texas Ethics Commission, P.O. Box 12070, Austin, Texas 78711, no later than January 7, 2000; and
4. that the executive director shall promptly refer SC-991135 to either the commission or to an administrative law judge to conduct hearings on the commission's behalf and to propose findings of fact and conclusions of law to the commission in accordance with law if the respondent does not agree to the resolution of SC-991135 as proposed in this ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION.

AGREED to by the respondent on this _____ day of _____, _____.

Mike Miller, Respondent

EXECUTED ORIGINAL received by the commission on: _____.

Texas Ethics Commission

By: _____
Tom Harrison, Executive Director