

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF

GREATER SAN ANTONIO AREA
TOURISM COUNCIL,

RESPONDENT

§
§
§
§
§
§
§

BEFORE THE

TEXAS ETHICS COMMISSION

SC-3130356

ORDER and AGREED RESOLUTION

I. Recitals

The Texas Ethics Commission (the commission) met on August 8, 2013, to consider sworn complaint SC-3130356. A quorum of the commission was present. The commission determined that there is credible evidence of a violation of sections 253.003 and 253.094 of the Election Code, laws administered and enforced by the commission. To resolve and settle this complaint without further proceedings, the commission proposed this resolution to the respondent.

II. Allegation

The complaint alleged that the respondent used corporate funds to make a political contribution to a candidate.

III. Facts Supported by Credible Evidence

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

1. The respondent is a domestic non-profit corporation located in San Antonio, Texas. The complaint alleged that the respondent made an unlawful political contribution to a candidate for San Antonio City Council. A candidate disclosed in a July 2012 semiannual report accepting a \$500 contribution from the respondent on April 5, 2012.
2. In response to the complaint, the respondent acknowledged making the political contribution but swore that the check was issued “in error, by accident or mistake and was not the result of a conscious indifference.”

IV. Findings and Conclusions of Law

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

1. A person may not knowingly accept a political contribution that the person knows was made in violation of chapter 253 of the Election Code. ELEC. CODE § 253.003.
2. A corporation may not make a political contribution or political expenditure that is not authorized by subchapter D, chapter 253, Election Code. ELEC. CODE § 253.094.
3. The prohibition applies to corporations that are organized under the Texas Business Corporation Act, the Texas For-Profit Corporation Law, the Texas Non-Profit Corporation Act, the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Law, federal law, or law of another state or nation. ELEC. CODE § 253.091.
4. A contribution means a direct or indirect transfer of money, goods, services, or any other thing of value and includes an agreement made or other obligation incurred, whether legally enforceable or not, to make a transfer. *Id.* § 251.001(2).
5. A political contribution means a campaign contribution or an officeholder contribution. *Id.* § 251.001(5).
6. A campaign contribution means, in pertinent part, a contribution to a candidate that is offered or given with the intent that it be used in connection with a campaign for elective office. *Id.* § 251.001(3).
7. Credible evidence indicated that the political contribution at issue was made by a prohibited corporation. Therefore, there is credible evidence of a violation of sections 253.003 and 253.094 of the 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 or 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 this sworn complaint.
2. The respondent consents to this order and agreed resolution and waives any right to further proceedings in this matter.
3. The respondent acknowledges that a corporation may not make a political contribution to a candidate or officeholder. The respondent agrees to comply with this requirement of the law.

VI. Confidentiality

This order and agreed resolution describes a violation that the commission has determined is 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 nature, circumstances, and consequences of the violation described under Sections III and IV, and after considering the sanction necessary to deter future violations, the commission imposes a \$250 civil penalty.

VIII. Order

The commission hereby orders that if the respondent consents to the proposed resolution, this order and agreed resolution is a final and complete resolution of SC-3130356.

AGREED to by the respondent on this _____ day of _____, 20__.

Greater San Antonio Area Tourism Council,
Respondent

EXECUTED ORIGINAL received by the commission on: _____.

Texas Ethics Commission

By: _____
David A. Reisman, Executive Director