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Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust

Memo

To: Mike Murawski, independent advocate
From: Karl Ross, ethics investigator
Date: February 3, 2016
Re: Jay Beskin, K06-004

Close-out Memo:

Late last year, this office was contacted by an individual who believed Jay Beskin, a candidate for the District 8 county commission seat, may have violated Sec. 2-11.1.1 of the Miami-Dade County Code, the Ethical Campaign Practices Ordinance.

Part (D)(1)(11) of said ordinance – regarding Voluntary Fair Campaign Practices -- prohibits candidates from using or permitting a member of their staffs from using “campaign material that falsifies, distorts or misrepresents facts.”

At issue is whether an e-mail soliciting campaign contributions sent on behalf of Mr. Beskin’s campaign by a supporter, Nancy Lee, of 20448 NE 34th Ct., Aventura, FL, violated the above guidelines in that it contained an incorrect statement.

The e-mail states that Beskin has been endorsed by *all* Aventura and Sunny Isles Beach commissioners. Ms. Lee acknowledged in an interview that she didn’t check her facts before sending the email “to about 30 friends.” She apologized for the mistake and said she was willing to send out an e-mail containing a correction.

Mr. Beskin, for his part, said he has been endorsed by five of seven Aventura commissioners and only one of five Sunny Isles Beach commissioners. He said he believes Ms. Lee, a local activist, is “well-intentioned” but noted she is not employed by his campaign or involved in any official capacity. He said he did not review her e-mail before it was circulated and did not approve the content.

Given that Ms. Lee is not a member of Candidate Beskin's campaign staff and given that both Lee and Beskin have disavowed the statement as inaccurate, it does not appear, after consultation with the independent ethics advocate, that the misstatement in Ms. Lee's e-mail rises to the level of an ethics complaint.

The case should therefore be closed.