



Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust

Report of Inquiry

Investigator: Sylvia Batista

Case No.: PI 13-001	Case Name:	Date Opened:	Date Closed:
Complainant(s): Isolina Marono	Subject(s): Deborah Centeno	06/07/13	07/16/13

Allegation(s):

On 6/6/13, Commissioner Isolina Marono (Marono), who was recently elected as commissioner for the City of Sweetwater, contacted the COE in reference to the campaign treasurer reports filed by her opponent, Deborah Centeno (Centeno).

Marono informed that she is personally aware of expenditures incurred by Centeno which were not listed on her campaign treasurer reports. On 6/10/13, Marono provided the COE with samples of printed mailers, door hangers and yard signs; the cost of which she claims are not listed on Centeno's expenditure reports.

Marono said that Centeno did not report expenditures associated with two "mariachi" parties, held on 04/23/13, and a fundraising dance party, held on 05/04/13, with live music and drinks at Tequila Rock.

Marono explained that Centeno's campaign made ample use robo calls to get her message to voters. Centeno's campaign made robo calls during the months of December 2012, January and February 2013, and during Easter, "LaRaza" day, Mother's Day and on Election Day.

Marono said that her review of Centeno's campaign treasurer reports reflect that Centeno did not list the expenses associated with the aforementioned campaign activities.

Relevant Law:

F.S., Section 106.021(3) – Campaign treasurer; deputies; primary and secondary depositories;
F.S., Section 106.07(4)(a)13 – Reports; certification and filing; and
F.S., Section 106.11 - Expenses of and expenditures by candidates and political committees.

Investigation:

Interviews

06/19/13 – Pedro Diaz, President, Diaz PR Group, Inc. –

Pedro Diaz (Diaz) contacted the COE in response to an e-mail from this investigator. Diaz said that his company provided political consulting services for Centeno’s campaign.

Diaz was asked about the payments made to his company from Centeno’s campaign, which totaled \$2,861. Diaz advised that he was hired as Centeno’s political consultant and, as such, he coordinated and paid for all printed material, mailings, and communications made in Centeno’s campaign. Diaz said that the payments made for communications included the robo calls made in the campaign. Diaz said that it is done in this manner to keep opponents from knowing what you are up to in the campaign. Diaz said that he does not keep records on the specific expenses incurred.

07/16/13 – Pedro Diaz –

Diaz was contacted and asked about the fundraising events held in connection with Centeno’s campaign. Diaz said that Diaz PR Group paid for the costs associated with the two “mariachi” parties held on 04/23/13. Diaz advised that the fundraising event held at Tequila Rock was free. Tequila Rock is a restaurant/lounge which is not rented out like a banquet hall. For this reason, they could not assign a monetary value to the event and report it as an in-kind contribution. The flyer for the event reflects a charge of \$10 per person which includes a drink and an appetizer. Diaz was asked about the \$10 contributions collected at the entrance of the fundraiser. Diaz explained that the deal with Tequila Rock was that they would keep whatever sums were collected at the door between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. Diaz said that the \$10 payment was requested as a contribution and was not mandatory. Tequila Rock remained open for their regular customers during the event.

Diaz said that they will file an amended campaign treasurer report if necessary.

Document/Audio/Video Review:

June 10, 2013 – reviewed Centeno campaign material and information regarding fundraising events held in Centeno’s campaign;

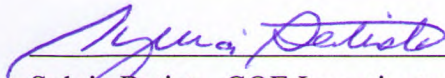
June 19, 2013 - reviewed Centeno’s campaign treasurer reports reflecting payments totaling \$2,861 to Diaz PR Group for communications, voter file, printing, mailing and marketing;

July 17, 2013 – conducted corporate search of Tequila Rock, Inc. Tequila Rock nor its owner are listed on Centeno's campaign treasurer reports.

Conclusion(s):

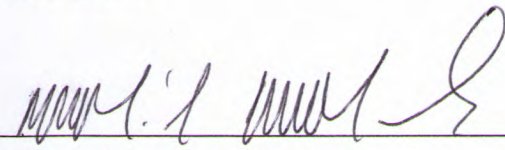
Commissioner Marono was advised that expenditures incurred during Centeno's campaign were paid for by Centeno's political consultant, Diaz PR Group. The only expense incurred by Centeno that was not reported was the Tequila Rock fundraiser which only related cost was the donations collected at the door between the hours of 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. If any election laws were violated, the violations appear to be relatively minor and unintentional.

Commissioner Marono was provided with a copy of this report, and referred to the Florida Elections Commission for further action. This inquiry is closed without further action.

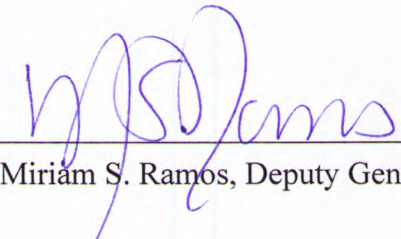


Sylvia Batista, COE Investigator

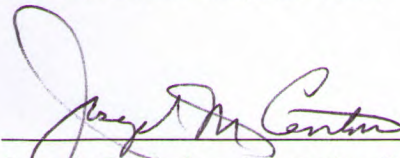
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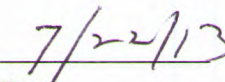
Michael Murawski, Advocate



Miriam S. Ramos, Deputy General Counsel



Joseph Centorino, Executive Director



Date