

**BEFORE THE GEORGIA GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND
CAMPAIGN FINANCE COMMISSION
STATE OF GEORGIA**

IN THE MATTER OF:	*	CASE NO.
	*	
CHRISTIAN A. COOMER	*	20-0073-C
	*	
	*	
	*	

CONSENT ORDER

This matter comes before the Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission (hereinafter "Commission") pursuant to a complaint filed by the Commission on or about October 5, 2020 and subsequently amended on November 23, 2020 and November 9, 2021. Now, prior to a final hearing on this matter, Respondents Christian A. Coomer and Christian Coomer Campaign, LLC (Commission Filer ID nos. C201000228 & C2018001170) (referred to collectively hereinafter as "Respondent") and the Commission agree to resolve the above-styled matter by Consent Order under the terms and conditions described herein.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Respondent Christian Coomer served as the District 14 Representative to the Georgia General Assembly from 2011 to 2018, after the filing of his declaration of intention to accept campaign contributions (DOI) on May 03, 2010. Respondent currently serves as a Judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, for which he filed his DOI to retain said seat on December 11, 2018.¹

At all times relevant to the alleged violations, Respondent Coomer was a candidate for elected public office, who was required to regularly report the amount(s) and source(s) of his campaign contribution(s), as well as, the end recipient(s) and sum(s) of his campaign expenditures through the filing of campaign contribution disclosure reports (hereinafter "CCDR"). See O.C.G.A. §§ 21-5-34(b)(1)(A); 21-5-34(b)(1)(B); 21-5-34(C); 21-5-34(D).

In addition to imposing regular reporting requirements, the Georgia General Assembly has also imposed a clear ban on the use of campaign funds by a candidate or public officer for expenses which are not ordinary and necessary expenses which are incurred in connection with the candidate's campaign for elective office or the retention or fulfillment of said office. O.C.G.A. § 21-5-33(a).

In the case *sub judice*, the Commission finds that Respondent:

¹ Respondent was appointed to the Court of Appeals on September 14, 2018 to replace Court of Appeals Judge Charlie Bethel, said appointment became effective on October 31, 2018.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT

PHILOSOPHY 101

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PHILOSOPHY 101

The course is designed to provide a broad introduction to the history and central issues of philosophy. The course will cover the following topics: the nature of philosophy, the history of philosophy, the philosophy of language, the philosophy of mind, the philosophy of action, the philosophy of law, the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of science.

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1. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$750.00 on April 15, 2015 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
2. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$750.00 on April 16, 2015 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
3. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$500.00 on April 21, 2015 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
4. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$750.00 on May 22, 2015 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
5. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$2,000.00 on June 30, 2015 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
6. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on November 8, 2016 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
7. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on November 9, 2016 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
8. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on February 14, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
9. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on February 15, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
10. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$2,000.00 on February 17, 2017 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
11. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on March 7, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
12. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,200.00 on March 7, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
13. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on March 8, 2017 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
14. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on his May 10, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
15. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on May 10, 2017 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
16. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,200.00 on July 5, 2017 from his campaign account to his law firm operating account.
17. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,200.00 on July 5, 2017 from his law firm operating account to his campaign account.
18. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$250.00 on November 9, 2017 from his campaign account to Mr. Joshua Earwood.
19. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,000.00 on April 6, 2018 from his campaign account to Committee to Elect Nels Peterson.
20. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$531.97 on October 29, 2018 from his campaign account to Ms. Kay Smith.
21. Failed to disclose on his CCDR a transfer of \$1,088.69 on November 1, 2018 from his campaign account to Ms. Kay Smith.

The Commission also finds that Respondent,

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22. Impermissibly expended \$2,718.36 in campaign contributions for unordinary or unnecessary expenses through the transfer of said \$2,718.36 on October 30, 2018 from his campaign account ending in #5012 to Ms. Kay Smith.
23. Impermissibly expended approximately \$540.22 in campaign contributions for unordinary or unnecessary expenses through payments on October 29, 2018 involving Ms. Kay Smith.
24. Impermissibly expended \$7,200.00 in campaign funds for unordinary or unnecessary expenses through the transfer of funds from his campaign account to his law firm operating account between April 15, 2015 and March 8, 2017. The Commission notes that funds were repaid to the campaign, and no campaign funds remain with the Respondent's law firm.

The Commission also further finds that Respondent,

25. Impermissibly expended \$1,343.89 in campaign funds on July 14, 2017 for unordinary or unnecessary expenses related to the purchase of airfare or related service fees with Delta Airlines for a mixed use trip to the State of Israel. The Commission and Respondent have reached the following figure after pre-hearing settlement negotiations and agreeing upon an apportionment formula to account for official and unofficial expenses incurred during said mixed use trip. During the trip, Respondent attended official meetings with various political, education, business and technology leaders. The Commission notes no campaign funds remain with Respondent.
26. Impermissibly expended \$1,343.89 in campaign funds for unordinary or unnecessary expenses related to the purchase of lodging, goods or services during a mixed use trip to the State of Israel from approximately September 24, 2017 to October 1, 2017. The Commission and Respondent have reached the following figure after pre-hearing settlement negotiations and agreeing upon an apportionment formula to account for official and unofficial expenses incurred during said mixed use trip. During the trip, Respondent attended official meetings with various political, education, business and technology leaders. The Commission notes no campaign funds remain with Respondent.
27. Impermissibly expended \$3,210.35 in campaign funds between June 6, 2018, June 9, 2018 and August 13, 2018 for unordinary or unnecessary expenses related to the purchase of airfare or related service fees with Delta Airlines for a trip to the state of Hawaii. At the time, said trip was intended by Respondent to include an official function, which would have permitted the use of campaign funds for some of the expenditures incurred, but the official event was cancelled. The Commission notes that funds were repaid to the campaign.
28. Impermissibly expended \$760.42 in campaign funds for unordinary or unnecessary expenses related to the purchase of goods and services during a trip to the State of Hawaii from approximately September 22, 2018 to October 1, 2018. At the time, said trip was intended by Respondent to include an official function, which would have permitted the use of campaign funds for some of the expenditures incurred, but the official event was cancelled. The Commission notes that funds were repaid to the campaign.

The Commission also finds that,

29. In October 2020, Respondent Coomer voluntarily made a charitable contribution for \$5,000 to the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundation.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. This is essential for ensuring the integrity of the financial data and for providing a clear audit trail.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data. These methods include direct observation, interviews, and the use of specialized software tools.

3. The third part of the document describes the results of the data collection and analysis. It shows that there is a significant correlation between the variables being studied, which supports the hypothesis.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results could be used to inform policy decisions and to guide future research in this area.

5. Finally, the document concludes by summarizing the key points and providing a list of references for further reading.

6. The fifth part of the document provides a detailed description of the experimental design. It includes information about the sample size, the control group, and the specific procedures used to conduct the experiment.

7. The sixth part of the document presents the data collected during the experiment. It includes tables and graphs that illustrate the trends and patterns in the data.

8. The seventh part of the document discusses the statistical analysis of the data. It explains the various tests used to determine the significance of the results and the confidence intervals.

9. The eighth part of the document provides a discussion of the limitations of the study. It acknowledges that there are some factors that could have influenced the results and that further research is needed to address these issues.

10. Finally, the document provides a list of references for the sources used in the study.

11. The ninth part of the document discusses the ethical considerations of the study. It explains how the researchers ensured that all participants gave their informed consent and that their privacy was protected.

12. The tenth part of the document provides a summary of the findings and a conclusion. It states that the results of the study are consistent with the hypothesis and that the findings have important implications for the field.

13. The eleventh part of the document discusses the future directions of the research. It suggests that further studies should be conducted to explore the relationship between the variables in more detail.

14. The twelfth part of the document provides a list of references for the sources used in the study.

15. Finally, the document provides a list of references for the sources used in the study.

30. In December 2021, Respondent Coomer voluntarily made a charitable contribution for \$2,000.00 to the Atlanta Volunteer Lawyer Foundation.
31. Respondent Coomer does not personally owe his campaign committees any funds.
32. Respondent self-reported various transactions to the Commission, did not file a motion to quash the Commission's subpoena, and has cooperated with the Commission in its investigation.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The Commission finds that Respondent was under an affirmative duty to report the amounts and sources of his campaign contributions and the end-recipient of his campaign expenditures pursuant to Sec. 21-5-34(b)(1)(B) of the Act; and that he failed to properly report approximately \$21,220.66 in campaign transactions as detailed *supra* in the Findings of Fact.

The Commission further finds that Respondent impermissibly expended approximately \$10,458.58 in campaign funds for unordinary or unnecessary expenses in violation of Section 21-5-33(a) of the Act as detailed *supra* in the Findings of Fact.

The Commission also further finds that Respondent impermissibly expended approximately \$6,658.55 in campaign funds for unordinary or unnecessary expenses in violation of Section 21-5-33(a) of the Act as detailed *supra* in Findings of Fact.

HOLDING

In resolving this matter, Respondent hereby agrees to the following:

Respondent believes that he has valid defenses to the Commission's allegations, including but not limited to substantive defenses and defenses based on statutes of limitations and procedural issues. In the interest of resolving this matter, Respondent has agreed to withdraw those defenses as to the Commission. Included among the defenses that Respondent is waiving as to the Commission in the interest of resolving this matter is Respondent's argument that the transfers between the campaign and law firm were not required to be reported under O.C.G.A. § 21-5-34, as they did not meet the definitions of the items required by the Act to be reported. The Commission does not allege that Respondent acted knowingly or intentionally with respect to any of the alleged violations in the complaint as filed and amended.

Respondent will pay a \$25,000.00 civil penalty to the Commission for violation of O.C.G.A. §§ 21-5-34(b)(1)(B) and 21-5-33(a) as detailed *supra*.

Respondent further agrees to pay the aforementioned civil penalty detailed *supra* to the Commission within thirty days (30) from the date of this Order. Said civil penalties may be paid with either personal or campaign funds.

Any and all other allegations raised against Respondent by the Commission which are not otherwise addressed by this Consent Order are hereby withdrawn by the Commission. The Commission agrees that the execution of this Consent Order will preclude the Commission from taking any further action against any Respondent based on any alleged violation of the Georgia Government Transparency and

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions.

2. It also emphasizes the need for regular audits to ensure the integrity of the financial data.

3. Furthermore, the document highlights the role of transparency in building trust with stakeholders.

4. In addition, it outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze financial information.

5. The document also addresses the challenges associated with data collection and analysis.

6. It provides a detailed overview of the different types of financial statements and their components.

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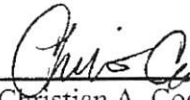
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Campaign Finance Act that predates the execution of the Consent Order, whether or not contained within the Findings of Fact or Conclusions of Law.


Solely for the purposes of the Commission's complaint against Respondent, Respondent does not object to the foregoing findings of fact, accepts the Commission's conclusions of law, and further agrees to abide by all terms of this Order. By signing this Order, Respondent waives any right to appeal pursuant to the procedures outlined in the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) as provided by O.C.G.A. § 50-13-1 *et. seq.*

Failure to comply with the terms herein, absent a showing of good faith, will constitute a violation of said terms by Respondent. Respondent's failure to comply with said terms in all material respects shall constitute a breach of this agreement and thereby authorize the Commission to seek enforcement and/or collection of this order by subsequent contempt or other proceedings against the Respondent in the Superior Court for the State of Georgia. The parties agree that all costs and attorneys' fees incurred by the Commission in any enforcement action shall be assessed against Respondent pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 21-5-6(b)(14)(C)(iv). The parties agree that this provision does not expand upon the Commission's rights as set out in the Campaign Finance Act in such circumstances

The Commission adopts the foregoing findings of fact and conclusions of law and orders the implementation of the terms of this Consent Order.




Christian A. Coomer
Respondent



Christian Coomer Campaign, LLC
Respondent

Order Prepared and Presented by:



Robert S. Lane
Georgia Bar No.: 178970
Deputy Executive Director &
General Counsel

SO ORDERED this 9th day of December, 2021.

Georgia Government Transparency and Campaign Finance Commission
BY:



Chairman

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